

True Deism, the Basis of Christianity:

O R,

OBSERVATIONS on Mr. *Thomas Chubb's*
Posthumous-works.

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Which shew,

How far the evidence of Mr. *Chubb's* Christianity seems to arise from his last writings.

A N D

Some of the blemishes and errors of those his writings, are pointed out.

To which is prefixed,

An ESSAY to demonstrate the truth and certainty of a particular providence.

By *CALEB FLEMING*.

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EPISTLE DEDICATORY

To the CHURCH of PROTESTANT DIS-
SENTERS, who meet in *Bartholomew-
Close*; and to my other worthy Friends,
in, and about *London*, the following Sheets
are humbly inscribed.

THIS DEDICATION is intended to express
the grateful sense which I have of your friend-
ship.

*A Treatise which exhibits the Ideas I have been
able to form of the Christian scheme, in a some-
what extensive view; I thought would appear with
some propriety thus prefaced with the public testi-
mony of my esteem and veneration of you.*

*The countenance you give a protestant-dissent, is
from a conviction of its being the cause of TRUTH
and LIBERTY. Which conviction is rational;
since such dissent imports, "that you own no other
"Law-giver or King in the Church of God, besides
"Jesus Christ: or as it is an open denial of pow-
"er or authority being vested in any man, or body
"of men on earth, to make and to enjoin rites of
"Christian worship, and terms of Christian fellow-
"ship. *"* And because one may safely predict the
loss of liberty, in Britain, to be the certain conse-

* See the *Dissenting Gentleman's three Letters to Mr. White.*

quence of an universal conformity to a civil establishment of religion. It is, it has been the case every where, all the world over.

And yet, many invidious reflections are cast on the whole body of protestant-dissenters; as if they were all Enthusiasts, Schismatics, Heretics, yea, Fanatics!

Accusations, much more easily brought, than supported. For how will the charge of Enthusiasm have place, where the Scriptures are acknowledged to be the sole rule of faith and practice; and reason confessed to be the sole judge of that rule?—or, can those men be justly reputed Schismatics, who are of peaceable and charitable dispositions; and whose separation from the Established Church, is upon the very same principle, on which the reformation from popery had its existence?—or can men be guilty of Heresy, who are not immoral?—and with a very ill grace does the Bigot call you Fanatics, who, in your religious profession, own but one Lord; and who are not fettered with subscriptions to any human creeds, or chained down to the observance of human rites and ceremonies.

The genuine principles of a consistent non-conformity, are truth and liberty; however weakly or wickedly many protestant dissenters may have mistaken or perverted them.

To the absurd tenets, and inconsistent conduct of such, I am inclined to attribute the growth of Infidelity, or that disgust which some have taken of the Christian profession.

Not that the unbeliever is hereby excused. For upon a thorough examination he would have known

that

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that no abuses to which Christianity is liable, nor any absurdities in its professors can reflect the least dishonour on either its doctrine or precepts.

Mr. Chubb, not having duly examined, presumes, in his Posthumous-works, to impeach even the system of Christian morals! which has induced me to make the following observations.

He has frequently taken cover in Scepticism, that most comfortable refuge of the unbeliever! which surely is not very becoming the right state of a rational mind, in its mature age and capacity: nor worthy the state of the evidence respecting religion, i. e. a man's concern with his Maker. The evidence here, will not require him to hang long in suspense, and grope his way thro' life, burrowing like the mole, whose greatest peril and terror is in light. This would reflect great dishonour on God, considered as a moral Governor. But he has shewn thee, O man, what is good: and what the Lord thy God does require of thee.—The grace of God, that bringeth salvation unto all men, hath appeared, teaching—

The Title which I gave a former treatise, viz. Truth and modern deism at variance; offended Mr. Chubb; tho' I told him, that by modern, I did not intend, true deism. Nevertheless, he has said, "such indeed is the penetration of some men, that they can discover connections and relations where there are none in nature; and such are their abilities, that they can constitute and dissolve connections and relations at pleasure; and that merely to exhibit an ill-natured reflection, or for the sake of a gibe." Posthumous-works, Vol. II. p. 379.

What more virulent censure can any pen deliver? and yet, how heavily do the unbelievers complain of the severity of their opponents?

I desire not to recriminate: but will observe, that the proposition which makes the head-title to this tract, viz. True deism the basis of Christianity, may be thus explained. "True deism, considered objectively, is, God's love of the world: considered subjectively, or in man, is his firm belief of God's love of the world: but it is the chief design of the Christian revelation to exhibit God's love of the world; therefore true deism is the basis of Christianity.—But to deny or disbelieve that God has made any express revelation of his love to the world, in the teachings of Christ and his apostles, is, modern deism fairly stated."

The unbeliever can with no justness claim the appellation of Deist, but from his professing to believe in God, and from his owning moral obligation. For if there be no such thing as moral obligation, there can be no God; i. e. no supreme moral Governor. But if God be a moral governor, then we must attribute to him moral perfections: such as justice, equity, goodness, truth, and faithfulness. The consideration of his being the patron of these branches of moral character in his creatures, and the avenger of the contrary vices, is the great operating principle, which balanceth the passions of mankind so far as to preserve that degree of order which subsists in this world of ours.

Human laws and maxims of government extend no farther than justice and equity. Goodness, in the forms of mercy, lenity, and compassion, so necessary

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ecessary to the welfare of mankind, is not under the sanction of civil government. It remains therefore necessary, that goodness should have had the enforcement of divine authority, which will infer an express revelation. For with respect to those voluntary engagements which men lay themselves under from the principle of benevolence, how would these have appeared of such importance, if God had not been known to be a God of truth and faithfulness? But men could not have had this idea of him, if he had never made any express promises, in the accomplishment of which, his truth and faithfulness have been manifest. So that the scheme of the unbelievers, by denying that any express revelation has ever been made, does deny that truth and faithfulness are moral perfections of the Deity.

It is very assuming in a modern deist, not to suppose that a Christian may be as capable of seeing evidence, and as solicitous to form a just estimate of its importance, as he himself can be. And yet, if we form a judgment by some late performances, there is nothing more ridiculous than the faith and religious profession of Christianity. Tho' the ridicule has no better foundation, than in the misrepresentations of it by some christians.

My design is to vindicate the reputation of the sacred writers; and to shew, that pure, genuine Christianity, as expressed in the New Testament writings, is no other than a plain, rational, divine scheme; supremely calculated to promote the rectitude and happiness of mankind! and incapable of having any absurdities or contradictions justly father'd upon it.

The first thing attempted, is, an essay to demonstrate the truth and certainty of a particular pro-

providence. *The denial of which doctrine, unbelievers have thought very necessary to render their scheme plausible.*

The subsequent remarks on Mr. Chubb's objections, have marginal titles affixed to their distinct sections. But I did not well know how to throw them into a just arrangement, or give an orderly digest of them. Some are noticed with great brevity; others are more largely considered, just as I conceived the subject would require.

*That system which I have endeavoured a defence of, has, besides all its extrinsic, these intrinsic criteria or marks of truth, viz. "it teacheth, that a
"love of God cannot be demonstrated, but by a love
"of all men; that a love of all men, must be directed by a rational love of ourselves. And because
"Jesus exemplified this in his doctrine, spirit and conduct; he was thereupon exalted to dominion. Hence it is, that Christians are obliged
"to exemplify their love of Christ, in their imitation and obedience of him. In the doing of
"which, their hopes of eternal life, thro' his ministrations, are justified."*

This is the very scheme of divine truth and goodness, which the unbelievers despise and reject!—Would to God I might be the instrument of convincing any one of them. For, if I know myself, I could willingly, with St. Paul, be accursed from Christ, i. e. be an anathema, a devoted thing, or give my life a sacrifice, by the authority, or example of Christ, if it might be the means of saving these rejecters of Christianity.

May none of you, my friends, ever be ashamed of, or neglect the great salvation! but by a rational faith, that works by love, may you adorn the doctrine of God our saviour in all things! is the devout wish, and earnest prayer, of,

Your devoted,

humble Servant,

*Hexton-square,
London, Jan.
10th, 1749.*

C. FLEMING.

ERRATA,

Page	Line	
47	— 12.	for <i>rhine</i> , r. <i>thy</i> .
<i>ib.</i>	— 13.	for a <i>period</i> , put a <i>semicolon</i> .
69	— 4.	after <i>it</i> , put <i>Vol. II. p. 88.</i>
104	— 34. and 35.	for <i>their honesty</i> , r. <i>the honesty of the Apostles.</i>
115	— 4.	for <i>with</i> , r. <i>without</i> .
124	— 25.	for <i>nor</i> , r. <i>not</i> .

E S S A Y

To demonstrate

The truth and certainty of a particular providence.

THE providence of God, in its general idea, supposeth his government of the world, by giving laws to the various distinct parts of it; laws suitable to their different natures, and by which the constitution of the whole is preserved.

This general providence consists of various laws or methods of the divine conduct, by which all the constituent parts are governed: or the general, is made up of particulars. e. g. there is one kind of law, that matter, the most inert and passive is put under; such as the stratas of earth, and the layers of minerals, &c. another to herbs, vegetables, plants and trees: another to brute animals; of these again there is great variety, as they are the inhabitants of the air, land, or water. And other laws yet, respecting creatures endued with reason and freedom.

These laws, I understand, to import active impressions of Deity that produce the several *phenomena* in the regular succession. Which active impressions are as necessary in one, as in another moment of existence, to the preservation of the present constitution. For what can *law*, intending the mere simple volition of a Being, signify to senseless, unintelligent matter? The idea of God's bidding this earth turn upon her axis daily,

ly, and perform her annual revolutions, would be of no significancy, if understood of mere command, or abstract volition. The will of God, or his laws, respecting his creation, are operative laws, which imply the perpetual impresson of his power. Gravitation and attraction are surely no other than the energy of Deity.

The wonderful regular succession of distinct species of plants and animals, are the produce of these active impressons of power, power endued with design, or intelligence.

A *particular*, I understand, as distinguishable from a *general* providence, thus. The general, includes those several laws which are essential to their different subjects: such as those of gravitation, attraction and electricity, the laws which guide the movements of inert matter. Vitality and a sort of instinctive freedom, guide the action of the brutal creation; diversified according to their distinct natures. Truth, or the will of God, the law of reason, the rule of free, moral agents. Which general laws are not violated in the exercise of a particular providence, tho' in special, or particular interposals of power, distinct individuals are either aided, or restrained by the freedom of its operations, in ways distinct from and independant of the operation of those general laws; but, in all given cases, subservient to them. These principles I will endeavour to demonstrate.

It appears, that a wide difference takes place in the laws by which God is said to govern rational and free creatures. In these, there appears a capacity of attending, or not, to the significations of the creator's will, respecting his creature's obedience: tho, at the same time, the rational and free creature is, in other respects, relative to his natural existence, as necessarily subject to those laws, as is the most inert piece of matter.

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Those laws, or significations of God's will, respecting which, man is at liberty either to attend or not, these do not at all imply such sort of energy as those other laws do, to which there is a necessary, and mechanical subjection.

But as this is the most exalted idea we are capable of forming, of God's creation, distinguished from his natural, by the term, *moral government*, will or providence; we may expect, that since his natural laws are subordinate, so they will be found subservient to the moral: or, that as his active power is ever needful to the government and preservation of the natural world, it will always be so directed, as may most conduce to the perfection and glory of the moral constitution.

Hence, upon the supposition, that none of the creatures below man, inhabiting this globe, are capable of moral government; one single man freely subjecting to the law, or moral will of God, is of more importance, in the scale of being, than all those inferior existences. And of consequence, the care of the governour, or his regard for him, will be proportioned to the capacity and dignity of his creature.

But man, free either to attend, or not, to the moral law of his maker, supposeth very great variation of his character; as either yielding or refusing such obedience. In such variation of character there must be a change of regard from the governor: for he cannot have the same idea and respect, to an obedient, as he has to a disobedient creature. Yet upon the supposition that he does not exercise an active providence, or is not at liberty to interpose; there will be no different treatment of man, either to reprove, rebuke, recover, or restrain him.

We also know by experience, that the utmost of those capacities and abilities given us, or at-

tainable by us, are not equal to the escapes of danger and evil, which do actually take place. And what might be said of the incapacities of the giddy, childish and youthful seasons? Let men reflect, who have made any observation. Sudden incidents, and occurrences take place, in mature age, which did not at all belong to our foresight or providence; and we are struck with surprise at the deliverance vouchsafed us! How often do we see it reasonable to own the protection, and to lift up our hearts to the protector, saying, *thou hast kept mine eyes from tears, my feet from falling, and my soul from death!* We take no step in life secure, absolutely secure from hidden, unforeseen danger. We know this from the many evil occurrences that affect others, in like circumstances. And we experience that the evils, which we call, *casualties* to others, are not too many *memoranda* of our own constant dependance.

The very constitution of an human body, that infinitely complex machine, is such, that its health and safety, its vigour and abilities are not within the power of the most temperate, and watchful; the circulation of the blood and nervous fluid, is not under our command. Nor can the deepest enquirers into nature, resolve the first springs of their movement into any thing else but the impression of Deity, *in whom we live, and move, and are.*

The energy of medicine to relieve and restore, must have the same source: as appears, from numberless instances which prove the scandal of the most skilful physicians.

The *crasis*, or state of the bodily constitution, has ordinarily a considerable influence on the mind; but as God has formed the mind of man for truth and virtue, it is but reasonable to conclude, that he should have such an actual sovereignty

reignty over the body, as to direct the state of it, so as may be most consistent with the mind's attaining to truth and virtue: or so as to adjust the quantity of trial, to the abilities of the intelligent and moral faculties. What I mean by this, is, that the active impressions of Deity upon the human constitution, must be supposed to be such, as he sees most proper on his part, to assist man in his moral conduct. This will by no means intimate that he ordinarily prevents the ill effects of criminal neglect, or abuse of the body; as by intemperance, or debauchery from taking place: or those of men's faulty inattention to the regimen with respect to diet, exercise, or rest, learnt from nature and experience: but, distinct from these, those various states or alterations of the bodily constitution, which his own foreknowledge discerns, would be most conducive to correct, to reform and reclaim, or to accelerate the well forming mental dispositions towards maturity. Such chastisements are for man's profit, that they might be partakers of his holiness.

What can be said more strongly in proof of an active constant providence, than the incapacity man is under of judging of the qualities of his food, or adjusting the quantities with that exactness upon which the health of his body mechanically depends? The palate and appetite are not critical judges, or rules of judgment; as the most careful, and virtuous often experience. Besides, how very different the qualities of the air we breathe, which mixes with our blood by respiration? And must the life of man be at the mercy of every morsel? and liable to a mortal action at every breath, without a guardian? It is quite absurd to suppose it! And it is as true now, as it always was, *that if men serve the Lord, he will bless their bread and their water.* And this

this is the universal testimony of God's being, and perfections, viz. *that he gives men rain and fruitful seasons, and fills their hearts with food and gladness.*

What can be said of wide destructions, which sometimes march, in solemn state, thro' Empires and Kingdoms. *When a nation, for instance, strong and without number, are raised up, and march thro' a land, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and who have the cheek teeth of the great lion: who lay waste vines, and bark fig-trees, and make them clean bare, and the branches thereof white. Who make the field bare, undeck her of her verdure, eating up every green thing. Who cut off the food of man before his eyes, and oblige vast numbers of families to fly for famine. They are like a fire devouring all before them, and behind them it looks as if a flame had burned. The land before them, tho' as fruitful as the garden of Eden, yet in their passing over it, they leave it a desolate wilderness. They are a strong people, set in battle array; they run like mighty men, they climb the wall like men of war, with their scaling ladders.*

Pray, who is the captain General of these armies? who directs their march? or appoints their stations of refreshment? will it be said, the winds? who directs them? God is said to have his way in the most irregular of them, *even in the whirlwind and in the storm; and the clouds are the dust of his feet.*

And which way shall we account for the earth's having produced her fruits in great plenty, or that the fields when loaded with corn, should be destroy'd by hail and rain? and the harvest spoiled? Are these the operations of chance, or of design?—Why does it rain on one city, and not on another? why does, sometimes, a drought parch

perch up the earth, and prevent any increase of her fruits? What shall we say, to the blastings and mildews! to the infinitely small *animalcula*, that are brought to blight the fruits of orchards and gardens? Are these, the workmanship of chance, and under her blind direction? Or if they are the creatures of God, must they not be under his direction, in their routs and executions? *Whatsoever the Lord pleaseth, he does, in heaven, and in earth, and in the seas, and in all deep places. He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth, he maketh lightning for the rain, which he directs in its course, he bringeth the wind out of his treasuries.*

Surely no reasonable man can conclude, that the lightnings, those arrows which fly by day, or by night, are allowed to kill at random! or that unintelligent fire can destroy men, God's intelligent creatures, without his commission. Can they be accountable?—On the other hand, what proofs do they afford, ocular demonstration, of an hand that guides and directs them, in the amazing distinction of the objects which they strike. *One is taken, another left!* tho' both on the same spot, or in the same apparent line of their direction.

The reason of a particular providence is also obvious from man's present situation, as it respects his obnoxiousness to the humours, passions, to the secret schemes, and covert designs of his fellow-men. All free, as well as himself to act reasonably, or against reason.—Man is, in no degree a match for the infinite dangers and hazards, to which his fellow-creatures expose him. These dangers not only are to be found among the malicious and envious, but also among the thoughtless and imprudent, tho' indifferent persons; yea, moreover from the benevolent and friendly; who are not the true judges of our interests,

terests, and often by mistake contribute to the hurt of those whom they respect and honour.—Constantly, therefore are we indebted to providence, *that we are delivered from unreasonable, absurd, and wicked men, for all men have not fidelity*: as well as that he keeps us from those evils to which the mistaken good will of our friends would expose us. In such escapes, it must be ordinarily said, that it is God, *who giveth us wisdom profitable to direct*.—

It would not be possible, that the reputation of man, which is at the mercy of every villain to stab or assassinate, under whose lips are the poison of adders, was there not a particular providence. What has been done by the tongues of men? a little member; but yet, *death and life are in it's power*. So that there is reason for that piece of admiration, *O how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that love thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men! thou shalt hide them, in the secret of thy presence, from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly, in a pavillion, from the strife of tongues*.

This is ordinarily the method God takes in his providence, of securing those who fear his name, from the fatal effects of calumny and detraction: and tho' there may be exceptions, yet they are comparatively few. And these may have their reasons, and answer most valuable purposes on the sufferers themselves, as well as hold out to others, the dependance they constantly have on the secret presence of God, to hide them from the pride of man.—It is a just observation, which the impious have not been able to stare out of countenance for near three thousand years, *viz. when a man's ways please*
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the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

But because we are not able to explain the manner of God's influences and operations, in his constant providence over individuals ; it is therefore looked upon, by some, as chimerical and visionary. Whereas from every view we can take of man, in whatever light we place him, it must be owned, that he is not equal to the danger and evil to which he is liable ; and could not possibly so generally enjoy such degrees of good or happiness, was it not for the constant active care of the governour.

It might be farther demonstrated, in the constant experience men have of the inefficacy of their schemes ; which seldom admit of being conducted upon their own plan, if they are permitted to reach any maturity. A train of ideas sketch out the process : but unforeseen occurrences interrupt, and, at least, change the plan. So true is it, *that a man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps.*

To suppose that God does not exercise an active providence, or interpose by his power in the government of this world, is to suppose, that he permits men to have more concern in it than he has himself : because the earth being divided into Empires, Kingdoms, and States, there are princes who exercise wide dominion, and by their several forms of government demand an extensive homage. And where-ever they behave upon the maxims of righteousness and truth ; they are great blessings to such large communities. This is by an active providence, or government that they produce such spreading benefits to mankind. But can we conceive them as any other than God's ministers ? or of their rule, as any other than
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very imperfect copies of the active government of God?

And how very intolerable would be the idea of most earthly princes, who are no other than proud, haughty and tyrannical; who spread slavery and wretchedness, and at their pleasure sacrifice their ten thousands, did we exclude a particular providence? One and another of these, whose ambition is insatiable, would, in successive attempts to grasp at universal dominion, depopulate the world, and lay waste the habitable territories of all opposers. And this must have been the case, if there had been no interposing power, who has said to all the great destroyers, *hitherto shalt thou go, and no farther*.—Are not the amazing successive ruins of the most extensive empires, so many monuments of the supremacy of God! and of the sovereign edicts of his rule? evidences, that the hearts of *Kings are in his hands; and that he turns them as the rivers of water, whithersoever he pleaseth*. But to suppose that God has no check, no controul on princes, or that he does not exercise any active providence at all, is to suppose him less actually a God to our world, than the mortal sons of men: which is an absurd supposition. But such are his acts of supreme dominion, *that he maketh the wrath of men to praise him, and the remainders of it he restrains*. To him must all princes be accountable, for the licences they have taken in spreading misery, devastation and death.

If there be no particular providence, then as God has no *freedom of agency*, so all events seem to be necessary; since they all take place according to some original, established laws, or decrees, which have provided for all the occurrences of ages. Not one thing can be a *contingency*; but all incidents and circumstances belong

long to the original plan : for do but allow one action of man to be a contingency. and not within the general establishment, as there would then be no laws to controul it's effects, it might over-
set the whole constitution. And if all events are within the settled laws, then there can be no actions of man, that are either virtuous or vicious ; because necessary. Whereas so far as men are moral agents, their actions either may, or may not be. But all those actions which express falshood, are a violation of the known laws and constitutions of God : no original establishment has made any allowance for these : consequently, as sin, in it's various forms, is a violation of all God's moral laws, it is necessary that he should have a liberty of agency, in limiting, controuling and so ordering it's effects, that they may not overthrow the whole frame and constitution of human society.

Man, as a free agent, having violated truth, may see the evil, and disapprove his conduct ; or else he may continue to repeat like violations. Yet this *penitency* in the offender, will not change the effect or tendency of the violation ; but he must be equally liable to the penalty, with the persevering offender, if there be no particular interposals of divine power. *But we know that there is forgiveness with God that he may be feared ; and that with him there are plenteous redemptions.*

An active providence, that concerns itself with individuals, in remitting, and absolving the penitent, appears necessary to support the moral obligation men are under to forgive one another's offences, upon the expression of penitency. For if man is formed with a capacity of expressing such a divine lenity, and compassion ; it is impossible but that his Creator must have an ability of expressing an actual forgiveness. Which is done, by either

absolving from the penal effect of transgression, or by abating it's force, or by rendering it the means of the *greater good* of the penitent. *Before I was afflicted, I went astray ; but now have I kept thy Word.*

Tho' every man's true worth is to be estimated from his personal abilities and dispositions, together with the right use and application of them ; yet, man's present comfort and safety do not depend on his own behaviour : but he is liable to violence and fraud in society, all men having capacities of injuring his person or property. So that the propriety of that petition, ariseth from the precarious condition of man, *viz. deliver us from wicked and unreasonable men : for all men have not faith*, nor fidelity. The many instances of *escapes* from the ruinous designs of villains, argue the very interposals for which we are contending ; nor will the instances of their success invalidate the conclusion. These are not too many to inspire with caution, the honest and industrious. And were they less frequent, perhaps men would generally be tempted, *to sacrifice to their own net, and burn incense to their own drag.*

But as men's hearts are hidden from our canvass, and various humours and passions may be excited in them towards us, either of envy, malice, or hatred concealed : they are capable of undermining our schemes, and of blasting the fruits of all our honest labours. So that the comfort and safety of any man, does not solely depend on his virtuous endeavour ; but is at the mercy of others. On which account, it is reasonable to suppose the freedom of divine interposals, in favour of those, *who trust in him with all their hearts, and who lean not to their own understandings*, as adequate to the success of their schemes : *but in all their ways acknowledge him, and he directs their paths.*

I might here mention, the strength or force of some passion, or appetite, when the exciting object has made it's address in every alluring form ! this has made it needful, that the young, or the vigorous should call in foreign aid ; I mean, *he should understand the fear of the Lord, and find the Knowledge of God ; in order that discretion may preserve him, and understanding may keep him from the infection.*—It is necessary that man does make God his principal in the whole scale of existences : and as most intimately present with him, in order to his escaping the malignity of temptation. There have been, from the earliest ages of the world, and will be such circumstances in which men may be placed, when no other repellent would be effectual, but that, of *how shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God ?* which makes God the principal in the scenery of human intercourse and action.

In the idea of God, not only revelation describes his *omniscience*, as a reason of homage and trust ; but reason, unassisted by revelation, would conclude some being equal in knowledge to the intricate ways of men, and to the perilous condition of individuals. And if equal in knowledge, equal also in care and concern about the safety of a creature, the most noble and exalted in this system of beings ; and yet, the most liable to evil. For the idea of omniscience will have no useful pleasing effect on the mind, if it did not imply supreme goodness.—

Not to suppose omniscience constant in it's operations, or not to suppose it an active omniscience, would be without any excitement of our passions ; and no more raise our hopes or confidence, than the contemplation of a fine picture, or the beauties of a piece of admired statuary.— But from the view of active omniscience, we can
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make the practical use of it ; *how precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God ? how great the sum of them ? should I count them ?*——no, I cannot——*they are more in number than the sand ! when I awake I am still with thee.*

With great perspicuity does a *particular*, appear to those who own a *special* providence, viz. that of miracles. For these, as under the ministration of Jesus Christ, and his apostles, were so many appeals to what are called, the *general laws* of nature ; and were manifestations of the same goodness which is *over all*. They removed defects in nature, restored men's lost abilities ; they gave senses that were wanting, and removed many evils from the mind and body ; which was in evidence of the doctrine of remission ; for these miraculous operations, were usually so many effective decrees of absolution, or pardon,—*thy sins be forgiven thee.*—They did not introduce a single unnatural phenomenon ; but had the very same complexion with pure nature, and discovered the same source of power, with that of the creation. They were the exact copyings of nature ; which occasioned Jesus to say, *my father worketh hitherto, and I work : and he who hath seen me, hath seen the father.* This, I own, can be no demonstration to those who deny that miracles have ever been wrought. But this no more alters the truth of the case, than a man's shutting his eyes at noon, is a negation of the light's shining. For to those who have their eyes open, it is perfect day.

A special providence, that of miraculous interposals, must have a special season for it's operation. So when that season is over, and the end answered ; as the reason ceaseth, so must the operation. This was the case with christian miracles. I mean, miracles wrought in evidence of the

the truth of christianity, which had no longer place than the age of the apostles, when the doctrine was confirmed, and committed to writing : the rule of faith and practice to all future ages. And no advantage would arise from a revival of miracles : for as *Jesus* said to the *Jews* who trusted in *Moses*, from a tradition of him, of about fifteen hundred years standing, [which *Moses* had wrote of *Christ*,] *if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my word?* So may it be said of Christian miracles, if men believe them not, how would they believe miracles wrought by others in this, or any other succeeding age, in support of those wrought so many ages since ?

There is likewise in the various capacities and dispositions of the human family, something analogous to a special miraculous providence, viz. in the surprizing difference of genius that is found in men, suited to this and the other art or science ! which instances, have been the reputation, and glory of our species. Men, have arisen, with superior abilities, for the investigation of nature, and the improvement of science : to which heights other genius's could never attain, by all the labour and culture that might be bestowed upon them.

But whether is more reasonable, to attribute these instances of surprizing genius to general original laws, operating uniformly : or to special interposals of divine power ? Let those adepts in the original constitution, decide the question ; and shew us how that original settlement can so operate, without any special interposals ; let them do it, if in their power. If it be not ; they must allow us to have the more rational side of the argument, who plead for a particular providence. And must be content, if we charge their scheme with very wild and groundless consequences ;

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only fit to be received by enthusiasts, who run mad with mistaken notions of reason and nature.

In these obvious respects, men may see a providence actually exercised over this world, in the immediate concern which they themselves have in it.

The objections to a particular providence over individuals, appear, to me, vain and trifling. Such as,

I. *It would argue imperfection in God's works, that they require his continued care : and that an artificer, among men, is able to form a machine with wheels and springs, that shall continue a regular motion for a given season wholly, independent on him.*

A case no way similar : for the utmost of his art, only derives it's efficacy from a knowledge of and dependence upon the established laws of nature. And all he is capable of doing, is only to modify given materials ; passive in their nature, and passive in the very springs of their motion. Their independence on the artificer, is wholly owing to their dependence on the laws of the great author of nature ; so that there is no manner of similitude : for the works of nature have all their significancy from their constant dependence on their author. And there is no imputation of *defect* in this constitution of things, tho' *less* perfect than a future one, if it is the fittest for the place it has in the dispensations of God.

II. *It is thought, that the doctrine of continual interposals of Deity, is not consistent with the freedom of man. Because it is said to infer, that God's agency is then the prime movement in all human agency.*

But this is not the truth of the case, respecting the morality of human actions. Because tho' man cannot perform any action, as the efficient cause of it, without given power; yet the morality or immorality of the action, solely depends upon his having attended, or not attended to the significations of God's will, or to the reason of things. So in the neglect of action, which he should have performed. For in those instances wherein any wrong action is done, notwithstanding the power of doing it was from God; yet, inasmuch as it was done contrary to the known will of God, it became a guilty action, on the part of man: tho' he could not have been an agent, but by the continuance of an ability to perform it. In all those cases, where God interposeth, and disables or prevents man from executing his purposes; if those purposes were either good, or bad in themselves, or so far as man intended them, the *design* enters into the account of man's moral or immoral character, tho' the action was not performed.

III. *The number of events, called by us, casualties, or accidents, are supposed to lie as objections to a particular providence.*

But the difficulty will be obviated, by considering, that if from this number, we subtract all that have taken place from man's not using his given capacities of thought and attention; and also what have taken place from his suffering passion and appetite to have the lead in his conduct; there will then be found comparatively *few* of those casualties, which are brought as objections to a particular providence. For it is not necessary to the character of a wise and good Governor that he interpose, by his power, or immediate special direction, in such cases where the given abilities are criminally neglected, or perverted.

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And

An Essay on Providence.

And as to other possible cases, which we deem, *casualties*, where there has not been any criminal neglect in the sufferer, these may have their use in the scheme of God's moral government, and give energy to the doctrine of a particular providence. In what wonderful methods are *secret murders* frequently brought to light?

IV. *It is objected, that in the great scenery of events which relate to mankind, we can ordinarily account for them, from the operation, of what are called, second causes; and therefore it is improper to attribute them to the direction of God's interposals.*

But as no great events have ever taken place, by the instrumentality of men, whose powers and abilities of execution must have been from the source of being, so the purposes served by such great events, have usually, if not always, been very different from those they had taken into their plan: which, I think, demonstrates the superintendency of an over-ruling providence. And in the very idea of second causes, a first is included. Hence the objection is without force.

V. *It has been said, I think, by the infidel, that all things come alike to all, one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the good and to the pure, and to the impure,—that as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath. That this is an evil, among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all.*

But this, in a sense, is false: for God, the wise and good governor, does even now accept the works of the good man; and he exerciseth a kind providence over him. All things work together for his good. He guides him now by his counsel. Whereas it is not so with the wicked. And notwithstanding this is not the state of the good man's full reward, or present good things, are
not

not the distinguishing marks of his character; yet, ordinarily he has the truest enjoyment of those things which he possesseth. He may indeed fall with the wicked, in a wide ruin! and so far, one event, may be said, to have been to them both. But his state and condition is not the same with respect to the consequences of that ruin. So that the objection can only be true; in some instances taken from the external appearance of things: for the favour of God, has the good man for its object; and his displeasure, has the wicked man for its object; which make the difference of infinite moment and importance.

I might have added, without a particular providence there could have been no express revelation, nor those *special* interposals, called miraculous. But the credibility of these will be shewn, in the following observations on Mr. Chubb's posthumous works. And thereby, the demonstration will be farther illustrated.

C H A P. I.

How far the evidence of Mr. Chubb's christianity seems to arise, from his Posthumous Works.

I N canvassing the writings of any author, great care should be taken to do justice to his argument; and, as far as we are able, we should find out his sentiment and view. When this is duly attended unto, it is very allowable to point out what inconsistencies or absurdities have place in his performance. If he reasons from professedly approved principles, which he avows as the guides of his operation, we then may so far apply them in support of the use he would make of them; or otherwise, as the manner of his handling the subject will admit. If, on the other hand, a writer professeth to be in doubt, or sceptical

tical in respect to the truth and certainty of any tenet; we are to consider in what state he has left the tenet, or what degree of evidence he has given it, in his reasonings. The same method should be taken whilst we are examining into opinions, or sentiments that he would expose and refute, as false, or erroneous.

Under these rules I will endeavour to guide my pen, whilst I am animadverting upon Mr. T. Chubb's *posthumous works*; and will treat his performance with a careful regard to Truth, or, as I could wish mine should be treated.

Article I. I shall first introduce the article of prayer.—
The usefulness of prayer acknowledged. *Prayer, he says, if considered as a positive institution, or something of like kind, the ground of which is not previous in nature, but only in the use of it it may be subservient to the petitioner's good, by introducing in him such proper reflections, and, thereby, proper affections and actions, as, otherwise, his affairs and advocations would divert him from; I say, if this be the case, then the forementioned difficulties seem to vanish. And, in this view of the case, God is not mocked by being invoked; for, as the invoker does not propose to inform the Deity, nor to make any alteration in him, by his prayers, but only uses God's name by way of petition, &c. in order to raise in his own mind such proper reflections, and, thereby, such affections and actions as will render him pleasing to his Maker; so, he neither desires nor expects to have his prayers answered, in any other way than in the natural course of things.* *Posthumous works, Vol. I. p. 282, 283.*

This is saying the thing one would wish him to say: and I chiefly differ from him in considering it a *positive institution*, or something of like kind, the ground of which is *not previous* in nature. Which he has indeed himself made improper;

per; forasmuch as he supposeth that prayer may introduce in man such proper reflections, and thereby proper affections and actions, as, otherwise, his affairs and advocations would divert him from. But then, this is to give up the propriety of his calling prayer a positive institution, the ground of which is not previous in nature: unless he could prove that a man can be so situated, as that his affairs and advocations will not divert him from such proper reflections, and proper affections and actions, which prayer is so proper a means of introducing. But if prayer is a proper mean to such an end, it has a previous ground in nature, *i. e.* in the present situation of man. And its having such an effect, he may desire and expect that it will have success in the course of God's providence; because for the reason of its having such an effect, it must alter the natural course of things, relative to him, from what they would have been, had no such effect taken place.

This conclusion will be supported from a declaration made by this writer, who says, that *whoever, from an evil disposition, or baseness of mind, refuses to be mischievous and hurtful to the intelligent world, and employs his abilities in answering so vile a purpose, such a one thereby renders himself the proper object of dislike and resentment to every other intelligent being, as he is a common enemy, whether each one has been an immediate sufferer by him, or not. And, in this view of the case, such a man may not improperly be said to be an enemy, and to be injurious to God, considering God to be an intelligent being: seeing he stands disposed to contribute to his maker's hurt, were it possible such a thing could be.* Vol. I. p. 389.

The wide difference made by prayer, as the mean of introducing proper reflections, and thereby,

by, proper affections and actions, from that of the mischievous man, will place them in as wide a situation respecting the natural course of things; unless we can suppose that God, an intelligent holy being, can look upon them as equally enemies and injurious to him.

If Mr. *Chubb* has contradicted the last representation given of a hurtful man, in a following page, no man can help it: the reasoning must stand as it is. He says, *I think it must be acknowledged, that no man ever designed, or intended to do dishonour to God, or to be injurious to him in his character, or otherwise.* Vol. I. p. 391.

I do not see any reason of this opinion, or how a man may be properly said to be an enemy and injurious to God, without any design or intention. For whatever extravagant notions they may have entertained, all wicked men know, that they are contemning the authority of God, whilst they are committing theft, murder, and violence. But moreover, *design* and *intention* have no small place in moral action. When a man casts off the fear, and insults the very name of God, can he be supposed to do it without any design or intention to dishonour him, or to be injurious to him, in his character, or otherwise?—Indeed were we to understand the proposition as confined to fanatics; I mean, persons who disturb the peace of the world, who injure and persecute, under the pretext of religion: of such, Jesus has declared, that they think *they do God service*, tho, at the same time their conduct proves, they do not know him. But the *postulatum* is too full for this restriction: viz. *I think, it must be acknowledged, that no man ever designed, or intended to do dishonour to God, or to be injurious to him in his character, or otherwise.* Every vicious man, or every fool, says in his heart, secretly

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wiseth, that there was no God: nay, it is the manifest language of his actions. In works they deny God: as they would confound and destroy the eternal difference of good and evil, right and wrong. We had better therefore abide by the sentiment of a wicked, mischievous man being the proper object of dislike and resentment to every other intelligent wise being; not only as he is a common enemy of mankind, but as he is properly an enemy and injurious to God; i. e. disposed to contribute to his maker's hurt, were it possible such a thing could be.

The right application of these principles, laid down, will naturally evince the usefulness of prayer.

Even the practice among pious people of saying grace, (as it is called) both before and after meat, Mr. Chubb has recommended; for he says, *that by these acts of piety, or devotion, a sense of God's providential goodness may be impressed upon the mind, with a thankful remembrance thereof; and to call this mocking of God, seems, at least, to be an hard saying.* V.I. p. 284.

Art. II.
Of blessing the Table.

Yet, as to prayer, a question may arise, whether it is a part of natural religion, or whether it is to be considered as a positive institution, or something of like kind? which question, perhaps, may much more easily be asked, than answered. p. 277, 278.

The difficulty, in Mr. C.'s idea, appears to be from a supposition he has made, that if prayer be a part of natural religion, then it seems to suppose that God not only hears, but also that he answers the requests of his creatures, by giving them what they pray for, if the request be reasonable, and for the petitioners good, and that this is generally the case; because, otherwise, perhaps, we shall be at a loss to discover what there is in nature,

nature, to be a proper ground for prayer, so as to render it a part of natural religion. Vol. I. p. 278.

What was said above, would in a great measure obviate this difficulty : for prayer, being, in the use of it, subservient to the petitioner's good, by introducing in him proper reflections, and thereby proper affections and actions, which otherwise his affairs and advocations would divert him from : this sufficiently shews the ground there is for prayer, so as to render it a part of natural religion. It needs not be supposed, that every request, that is put up by a good man, should be granted : for if he is led by the prayer to proper reflection, &c. the prayer has it's effect upon him, and answers it's great intention.

The asking for particular favours, such as *health*, the removal of disease, or pain ; the continuance of the life of a dear and valuable friend, &c. Tho' these should be denied, there was a ground in nature for the petitions ; even from a just and rational self-love ! but what if we succeed not in the requests ? the petitions were not less reasonable : and they must have been regarded, as what became us, by the object of our address, tho' God should see fit to disappoint us. For in our putting up petitions for special favours, we suppose it in the breast, and wholly at the pleasure of our maker to indulge us, or not. And that his wisdom is alone sufficient to determine what will be most for the universal good. Nor is the prayer useless, because literally, or in the very article unanswered, if it has but that good effect upon ourselves ; which, prayer has so apt a tendency to produce.

There are besides, addressees we make in the form of petitions, which are rather intended to enlarge our benevolence, and improve our humanity,

manity, than to excite an expectation of any answer to our request. *e. g. thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven.* This is rather a pious wish, that such an happy state of things had place with us, than an expectation of our seeing it.—In like manner, when we pray for princes and magistrates, that they may all rule in the fear of God; we intend not by it, that God should, by any compulsive influence, make princes, any more than other men, pious. But nevertheless, such sort of petitions have an apt tendency to preserve in us just notions of human government and governors: it keeps up the supremacy of our esteem, veneration, and awe of God! and spreads in the minds of men an abhorrence of all usurpation of dominion over conscience. Yet,

The declaration, *John xvi. 23.* is said to be a most unbounded promise made by Christ, viz. *that whatsoever the disciples should ask the father in his name, he would give it them.* Vol. I. p. 281.

Had it been attended to, it might have been known that *the name of Christ*, most properly, and most usually signifies his *Authority*, or the *rule* which his doctrine or Gospel prescribes; and then there would have been no room for the calling it, a most unbounded promise, that stood in need of Mr. Chubb's limitations: for it was always a truth, since our Lord delivered himself thus, not only respecting the apostles, but all Christians in every age, have, and shall have, whatever they ask of the Father, in the Name of Christ.

To do Mr. Chubb justice, he has acknowledged, that tho' a man in praying for the forgiveness of his sins, or for daily bread, does not desire or hope for success, but upon the known

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principles of truth : *i. e.* in the one case rendering himself a *fit object* of mercy, and in the other he expects bread in the general course of God's providence: nevertheless,—*supposing*, says he, *there be an impropriety in praying to God, for what prayer will not be a means to obtain; yet, that impropriety, or prayer, thus circumstanced, surely, is not mocking of God.* V. I. p. 283.

In the case of asking forgiveness, there is an aptitude in the petition to dispose the man to true penitency, and so to make him a fit object of mercy. In the other case of asking for daily bread, it has a tendency to inspire with courage, and excite to the diligent application of our own capacities in order to obtain it. With a superior cheerfulness does a man pursue his labours, who has owned his dependance on God's blessing for the success of them; far superiour to what that man can experience, who denies God's providence, and attributes every event to a surly, unyielding, inexorable fatality.

Another instance of Mr. Chubb's yielding to evidence, and which has given me considerable pleasure, is, in the article of a *special providence*, and a *revelation*. This appears from several places in his *posthumous tracts*. I will cite a few of them.

Art. III. Under the *Jewish State*, Mr. Chubb says, that A special God, sometimes, by his special providence, interposed, and advised them, and brought his blessings and his curses upon them. V. I. p. 87.

Another place is express both for a special providence, and in support of a revelation; his words are, *When men are sunk into gross ignorance and error, and are greatly vitiated in their affections and actions, then, God may, for any reason I can see to the contrary, kindly interpose, by a special application of his power and providence, and reveal to men such useful truths, as* other-

otherwise they might be ignorant of, or might not attend to; and also lay before them such rules of life, as they ought to walk by; and likewise press their obedience with proper motives, and thereby, lead them to repentance and reformation:—I say, this may be the case.—V. I. p. 292, 293.

These are concessions made in favour both of a special providence, and an express revelation. And besides this,

He has allowed, that the Christian revelation is the most perfect: for he says, *It may perhaps be a piece of justice due to Christianity (could it be clearly defined, and certainly determined what Christianity is, and could it be separated from every thing that hath been annexed and blended with it) to acknowledge that it yields a much clearer light, and is a more safe guide to mankind, than any other traditional religion, as being better adapted to improve, and perfect human nature:—*V. II. p. 370.

Article IV. The Christian the most perfect of all traditional religions.

Nay, he has not denied, but that miracles might be wrought in support of Christ's mission, which, he thinks, was divine. *If such a superiority of power attended Jesus Christ, as the histories set forth; then, as that ministry, and the power which attended it, seem, at least, in general, to have terminated in the public good; so it is more likely that God was the primary agent in the exercise of that power, than any other being; because it is more likely, that God should be concerned for the common good of his creatures, than that one creature should be thus concerned for the good of the rest; and then it is probable Jesus Christ, on whose will the immediate exercise of that power depended, did not use that power improperly, by imposing upon mankind to their hurt, seeing that power appears to have been generally well directed in other respects, and*

Article V. Miracles consistent with God's perfection, and probably were attestations of Christ's divine mission.

Art. VI.
Christ's
mission
was di-
vine.

seeing he was answerable to his principal for the abuse of it. From these premises, or from this general view of the case, I think this conclusion follows, viz. *Christ's mission was divine.* V. II. p. 396.

Art. VII.
He wrote
not out of
disrespect
to the per-
son and
ministry
of Jesus
Christ:

And to put it out of all debate, that he has written with no design to shew disrespect to the New-Testament Writings, or to Jesus Christ, or to his Apostles; take the following passages. *If any shall say, that what I have written, is out of disrespect to the person and ministry of Jesus Christ; to such I answer, beforehand, the accusation is false. And as, upon the Christian scheme, Jesus Christ will be the judge of quick and dead; so I assure my readers, that, in this view, and under this consideration, I have no disagreeable apprehensions on account of any thing, that I have published to the world.* Ib. p. 353, 354.

Whatever ambiguity there might possibly be in this declaration; Mr. C. will be chargeable with great prevarication, and an intention to deceive, if he had no confidence in that fact on which he assures his readers, *that, in this view, and under these considerations, I have no disagreeable apprehensions.* i. e. he either had this view, and conducted under this consideration, or not; and this either was, or was not the ground of his quiet and serenity. If he was not in earnest in his belief that Jesus Christ will be judge of quick and dead, he is chargeable with very criminal trifling; and a sort of legerdemain, or magical deception! but if he really had such views, and such dependance, then he assures his readers with a good grace; and is not chargeable with any such solemn grimace, as would appear, under the suspicion of his sincerity. I think, the laws of charity will not admit censure.

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He having spoken of some doctrines in the epistles as erroneous, says, *I do not intend by this, to lead my readers into a neglect of the writings of the apostles; much less, with the laity of the church of Rome, to lay them quite aside;*—
 V. II. p. 345.

Art. VIII.
 Nor of his
 Apostles.

Again, *As the writings of the Apostles were occasional, so they contain many excellent cautions, advices, and instructions, which serve for the rightly directing our affections and actions.* Ib. p. 344.

And of Christ, he writes thus, upon his lamentation over Jerusalem.—*This is the excellent and beautiful character which is given of our Lord Jesus Christ: and which no doubt, was uniform and consistent, thro' the whole course of his life: allowing for the frailties of nature he might have been liable to.* Ib. p. 180.

Art. IX.
 Christ's
 character
 excellent
 and beau-
 tiful.

From these passages he would have us understand, that he allows the probability of a special providence; of a special revelation; of the truth of Christ's divine mission; and that miracles might be wrought by God in attestation thereof. And tho' he has used much ridicule in treating on the miraculous conception of the virgin: yet, all his spirit evaporates, by declaring, *That God may, if he pleases, bring a man into being this way, that is, he may, if he pleases, create, or otherwise produce, human seed in the womb of a woman, and make it answer the same purpose, as if it had been introduced, by the operation of a man, in the ordinary course of generation.* V. II. p. 278.

Article X.
 Miracles
 farther
 acknow-
 ledged.

This is to allow the possibility, or that it involves no absurdity: for he says, *God may if he pleases do this.* And respecting the phrase *begotten*, applied to Jesus, as the son of God, he

owns,

owns, that the word is figurative, as Christians are said to be begotten thro' the gospel. Ibid.

Having admitted the probability of Christ's mission being divine, he thus expresseth himself, Art. XI. *I say, the great question with us must needs be, what was that message? and not, who, or what was that messenger? because a messenger, considered abstractedly from his message, is a mere fiction, is nothing: seeing the very character of a messenger, as well as the importance of that character, are merely relative, resulting wholly from the important message they stand related to.* V. II. p. 55.

A plain
rule of
judging of
Christ's
character.

So that the New Testament writings are a rule of judging, every way adequate to the capacity of all who are privileged with them; by which alone the characters of the several writers, and the importance of those characters may be determined. Neither can they oblige, as a rule of men's forming their judgments and practice, farther than the message they contain.

These concessions should have their weight; notwithstanding any raillery, either here or elsewhere, he may have bestowed upon the subject. It is an open declaration, that miracles recorded, and the doctrines revealed, are what imply no absurdity.

Yet, he thinks it not likely that Jesus Christ was so produced, as above mentioned, and that no great or good purpose could be served by it. The opinion is not singular, tho' it denies the authority of two evangelists, and would throw aside a prophecy, which we are perswaded did refer to the Messiah, viz. that of a virgin, or maid, conceiving and bringing forth a son. But of this more hereafter.

Art. XII.
The Probability of
a future
state of
retribution.

Mr. Chubb has also affirmed the probability of a future state of retribution; for having considered man as made free, and capable of being a friend or an enemy to the common good; he says,

says, *hence arises a probability that there will be a future state of existence to men, in which state, God's favour and displeasure will be properly and amply shewn forth*;—V. 1. p. 381. And again, *as I think, were I intrusted with the execution of civil justice, I ought, and should, reward those that have generously contributed to the public happiness, and punish those who have basely and wickedly contributed to the public hurt, had I a perfect knowledge of their cases, and had I power sufficient for these purposes*; so, from hence I cannot but conclude, that God who is the most perfect intelligence, goodness, and boundless power, will much more do so; and consequently there will be a future judgment and retribution. Ib. 397.

Art. XIII.

This is a conclusion drawn with more assurance, than a bare probability would support: it is drawn from what he knew of himself; and in which he infers the certainty of a future judgment and retribution.

The certainty of it.

Yea, with regard to future punishments, he has thus expressed himself: *Upon the whole of this argument, I observe, that as we have all the certainty the nature of the thing will admit, that the divine conduct, in all things, in all instances and cases, will be conformable to perfect rectitude*; so we are thereby certain that the Deity will not punish needlessly, or without any just ground, nor will he extend it beyond its proper bounds. Ib. 421.

Art. XIV.

Future punishments how conducted.

If any regard is due to the most sober declarations, that have in them the air of sincerity, we have Mr. Chubb's opinion in favour of the usefulness of prayer.—He owns a special providence, and an express divine revelation.—That the Christian revelation is the most perfect of any traditionary one.—That miracles are consistent with the perfections of God, and probably were

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attestations of the truth of Christ's mission.—He solemnly declares, that he has not written out of disrespect to the person and ministry of Jesus Christ; but that upon a dependance on Jesus Christ being the judge of quick and dead, he has no disagreeable apprehensions.—Nor has he any design to lead his readers to a neglect of the writings of the apostles.—That as to Christ's character, it is excellent and beautiful.—And he has not only allowed the probability, but affirmed the certainty of a future state of retribution. And has likewise given his opinion as to future punishments.

From these premises, for any to say, that Mr. Chubb did not profess himself, or that he was not a *Christian*, would be an unjust conclusion. In the above portrait, as far as I know, I have fairly represented him in all the articles which I have cited.

CHAP. II.

Shews some of the blemishes, and imperfections that are to be found in Mr. Chubb's posthumous-works.

THIS is the more difficult and less pleasing part of the undertaking. Yet in it, I will not only endeavour to do his writings justice, but as far as the cause of truth admits, treat his errors with candour.

Section I.
Revelation can have no previous ground.

Mr. C. has, without scruple, given us very explicate accounts of his disbelief of any revelation; tho' he takes much pains to overthrow the credibility of one! e. g. *I have already observed, that divine revelation is above or out of the ordinary course of nature, and as such, we can have no previous ground to presume or expect that there is or will be any such thing; nor can we possibly*

be under any previous obligation with regard to it; and therefore we cannot be obliged to seek after it. To this, I may add, that it seems a little preposterous for a man to hunt after a guide to his judgment and behaviour, when the author of his being has placed one in his own breast; especially if it be considered, that the guide he has must be proper and sufficient to answer the purpose aforesaid; because, otherwise, the author of nature, who is the most perfect intelligence, and of the most boundless power, must have been greatly wanting to his own design. Vol. II. p. 30.

I would first observe, that Mr. C. is able to remove all the mist he has raised, from a man's hunting after a guide to his judgment, and behaviour; because not able to discover whether the *New Testament*, as we have it, or the *Coran*, as we have it, are genuine accounts of the Christian, or of the Mahometan revelations. He shall himself clear up the cloudy heaven which his own imagination had created: for these are his very words respecting *Christ's* divine mission; *I say, the great question with us must needs be, what was that message? and not who, or what was that messenger? because a messenger, considered abstractedly from his message, is a mere fiction, is nothing; seeing the very character of a messenger, as well as the importance of that character, are merely relative, resulting wholly from the important message they stand related to.* Vol. II. p. 55.

This will enable us to place the rule in sight of every man, even those of the lowest understanding; for the word is *nigh* them. They are under no obligations of hunting after a rule. The message is before their eyes, and they may judge of the messenger, and the importance of his character by it, with as much ease and certainty as

if they had lived in *Judea* from the first of the reign of *Tiberius*, down to the end of *Nero*, and had conversed personally with *Christ* and his apostles: or had been witness to the Churches, thro' the *Roman* and *Grecian* empires, receiving the New Testament writings as agreeable to the doctrines that had been taught by the apostles, every where. It is the message and the importance of it, that determines the character, and the importance too of the messenger's character. And this we have before us, which wholly excuseth the honest and serious any further labour in *hunting*; than that of a diligent attention and due application of the rule.

Nor would I have the *unbeliever* triumph in his notion, of the universal sufficiency of reason, or the light of nature. The New Testament writings have taught this doctrine, as plainly as he is able to do it. *Jesus* says, *that no man can come to him, except the father*, i. e. the evidences which he exhibits of God's paternal character, *draw him*. And it is because men did *believe in God*, *that they did also believe in Jesus*. *St. Paul* has affirmed, *that that which may be known of God*, is manifest to the pagan world; *for God hath shewed it unto them*. And that when *the Gentiles which have not the law*, do by nature, or habit, *the things contained in the law*, *these having not the law*, are a law unto themselves. And *St. John*, in the introduction to his Gospel, (which Mr. C. had imagined, was his own private opinion) speaks of God's having always been *the life of men*, and *that very life was properly their light*. *That the true light was that which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*. That God had always had his being and perfections manifest to men in his providence, and the world had been made by him, and yet, *the world knew him not*. And when our

Lord

Lord speaks of the importance of the revelation he has made of God's will, he never reflects on the light of nature, as not having been a proper and sufficient guide to men. Yet, he tells his disciples, and those people who had been the witnesses of his works, that their remaining infidelity would make it *more tolerable* in the day of judgment, for the inhabitants of cities, under the light of nature, that had been judicially destroyed for their wickedness, than it would be for them! And when speaking of a wicked christian, in comparison with a wicked heathen; he says, that *he who knew his Lord's will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes: whereas he who knew it not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few. for unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required:--* so that if we may rely upon the judgment of Jesus, it will be very dangerous for any man to reject the Gospel, under a pretence that the light of nature is a proper and sufficient guide. The apostles thought it of the utmost importance, to all to whom it was addressed. Is it not then too great a presumption for any man, to conclude hastily, that they were all mistaken?

Again, by divine revelation being above or out of the ordinary course of nature, I suppose Mr. C. means, that if there was a divine revelation, it would be a divine revelation.—But upon his denial of there being any such thing; affirming that we can have *no previous ground* to presume or expect there will be any, his meaning is not so evident. What the *previous ground* intends; whether it be supposed to be in, or out, above or below the ordinary course of nature, is not so obvious. If he means, a previous ground in the ordinary course of nature, of expecting something out of and above the ordinary course of nature, this will be

a perplexed case: but if we may suppose an actual ground of presumption and expectation out of the ordinary course of nature, of such a revelation, all the difficulty and confusion will be removed. Now, that such a *previous ground* is very supposable, Mr. C. thus acknowledges: *When men are sunk into gross ignorance and error, and are greatly vitiated in their affections and actions, then, God may, for any reason I can see to the contrary, kindly interpose, by a special application of his power and providence, and reveal to men such useful truths, as otherwise they might be ignorant of, or might not attend unto, and also lay before them such rules of life, as they ought to walk by; and likewise press their obedience with proper motives, and thereby, lead them to repentance and reformation;* Vol. I. p. 292, 293. which is expressly allowing a previous ground of presumption and expectation, in such a disordered unnatural state of man. If therefore there ever has been such a state of mankind, as is here supposed, tho' a divine revelation be above, or out of the ordinary course of nature, it was to be expected; and we have no room of doubt, but as there has been such a previous ground in the disordered condition of mankind, such revelation has been given: and of consequence, we are under obligation with regard to that revelation, and it is our duty likewise to seek after, i. e. enquire into its evidence. Neither is it at all preposterous for a man to attend to the divine revelation, as the guide of his judgment and actions; because tho' God had placed in man a guide proper and sufficient to answer the purposes for which it was given, yet, man having sunk into gross ignorance and error, and become greatly vitiated in his affections and actions, that divine revelation became useful and proper for him in such circumstances.

And

And that a divine revelation has been afforded to man, we have full and sufficient testimony; and also the sundry times and diverse manners of its being given, are expressly ascertained in the sacred records: the truth of which record is verified by abundant experience and fact. So that what this author has allowed in one place, wholly demolisheth what he would disallow in another. And it is the grand mistake which men usually run into, who would controvert a divine revelation, viz. that because the reason of man, rightly used, under the light of nature, is a proper and sufficient guide to all, who thus use it, and are not favoured with an express revelation; that therefore when this has been generally perverted, and a revelation has been afforded, they are quite unconcerned with the revelation given. This is an enormous mistake. For the revelation, if divine, will harmonize with the precepts of nature, and enforce them by proper motives: and its doing so, must oblige men, however virtuously they are disposed, to make use of this super-added means of virtue and holiness. And it will be at their peril, that they despise or reject it.

It is said, *that the revelation, like a pack of cards, is capable of being shuffled and cut, compounded, and divided, and dealt forth, so as to answer the depraved appetites, and the various interests of men.* Vol. II. p. 63. Sect. II.
Revelation compared to a pack of cards.

This ludicrous simile, will as well suit that proper and sufficient guide in a man's own breast, which we shall find Mr. C. a strenuous advocate for: men who are without an express revelation, and all who think proper to condemn and despise it, are as capable of shuffling and cutting, compounding and dividing, and dealing forth, so as to answer their depraved appetites and various interests, as those men who believe a re-

revelation.—Did the revelation appear to countenance any trick, dissimulation, or unjust behaviour; did it, in the least, instruct men in any of the little, knavish, or vicious arts and practices; the simile might then have been admitted, as used with propriety. But if it most universally abhors and discourages all disguise, cunning, stratagem, that may impose upon and injure any of our fellow-creatures: then it must be allowed, that the simile is very unjust. and one may safely aver, that the revelation is not capable of such use; but as men mistake, pervert and abuse it.

Its *peculiar* doctrines are plain, and obvious: such as, that of remission of sins being connected with true repentance, without any sacrifice, or ritual which had been either a part of Jew, or of Pagan theology. That the obedience actively and passively expressed in the life and sufferings of Jesus, shall be the exemplar of mens acceptance with God. In which sense, *he has given his life a ransom for many*; that is, all such who imitate his obedience shall be raised from the dead, by the ministration of *Christ*, and introduced into a state of final happiness. And his own exaltation to power and dominion is the earnest and pledge of their final justification.

These are the peculiar, but plain and obvious doctrines of Christianity: so that if men shuffle and cut with them, or use them as they would a pack of cards, it is not owing to any defect in the revelation, but to a defect in their own attention and integrity. Nay, more than this, there is all the precaution taken in the teachings of *Jesus*, to prevent mistake; since every worldly motive is excluded any influence in the laws and maxims of God's moral government, under *Jesus*. Which motives being perversely introduced by vain, designing men, has been the true source

of all the shuffling, and cutting, and dealing forth that is so loudly complained of. A consideration, that will fully secure the credit and honour of the Gospel scheme, from all reproach and scandal.

Christianity Mr. C. says, is altogether indeterminate, therefore, what is deemed to be such, by each Christian sect, that is true religion to that Sect; and its opposite, in any of its branches, is false religion to them. Vol. I. p. 294.

Sect. III.
Ridicule
pointed at
Revela-
tion as
indeter-
minate.

This is playing with truth, and militates even with this writer. For tho' he here says, Christianity is altogether indeterminate; yet he tells us, *By Christianity I mean, that revelation of God's will which Christ was in a particular and special manner sent to acquaint the world with: and so far as the writings of the apostles are consonant with it, they come under the denomination of Christianity.* Vol. II. p. 346.

Hence any one may plainly discern, that he, by his own definition of Christianity, has shewn, that it is determinate; and therefore the burlesque before bestowed upon it, is a mistaken thrust, and no better than a brandishing of his sword in the air. Hence that other passage, *ib.* p. 370. *could it be clearly defined, and certainly determined what Christianity is, &c.* will share the same fate: and must be esteemed no other, than the sceptical shaking, or wavering of his pen. For if Mr. Chubb could have a meaning, which he thought would determine what Christianity is, another may; and I think his meaning is very clear, and his definition just and indisputable. We are therefore obliged to understand his ridicule, when pointed at Christianity, *as if it was indeterminate, altogether so, and as not separable from every thing that has been annexed and blended with it,* to be no otherwise a truth, than as we take our views of

of it from human systems and practices. For, in reality, when we form a judgment of Christianity in a right point of view, we find it determinate; and to intend, *that revelation of God's will, which Christ was in a particular and special manner sent to acquaint the world with: and so far as the writings of the apostles are consonant with it, they come under the denomination of Christianity.*

But then he says, *From the four Gospels, he thinks, the Christian revelation is to be chiefly, if not wholly collected.* Vol. II. p. 72.

This seems rather to contradict the definition he has given; for if by *so far as the writings of the apostles are consonant with that revelation which Christ made, has any meaning; i.e.* if there be any consonancy in their writings with Christ's doctrine, and they thus far come under the denomination of Christianity, then it must follow, that what Mr. Chubb thinks about the four Gospels at one time, is not consistent with his definition of Christianity at another.

But what is more perplexing, he says, *That the history of the apostles ministry, does not clear up, but rather darken and perplex the subject: so that what is Christ's message, or what is the Christian revelation, strictly and properly so called: this must be chiefly, if not wholly collected from the histories of Christ's ministry, as we have not materials elsewhere to gather it from.* *Ib.* p. 73.

I am not able to reconcile this with the above definition, nor with that declaration we have cited, viz. *I intend not to lead my readers into a neglect of the writings of the apostles,—much less, to lay them aside.* What can lead to a neglect of them, if this representation cannot? viz. an affirmation that the history of their ministry does not clear up, but rather darken and perplex the subject?

Worse

Worse yet, *Christ's message has been so loosely and indeterminately delivered to the world, that nothing but contention and confusion has attended it, from its first promulgation down to this time; insomuch that what has been deemed to be Christianity in one age, and by one people, has not been so in, and by another. And as to the books of the New Testament, they have been so far from being a remedy to this evil, that they have been partly the disease, or at least they have contributed to it, as the most opposite and contrary doctrines are capable of being grounded, and have been grounded upon them; —* Vol. II. p. 247.

Sec. IV.
Christ's
message
loosely de-
livered.—
The New
Testament
partly the
disease.

It is very strange, that when our Lord has foretold the abuses of his Gospel, and the evils that men would introduce by a neglect of its Spirit, and by an enmity to it; that these things, taking place according to his prediction, should be urged in objection to the Gospel! *I am come to send fire on the earth, and what will I, if it be already kindled?—think you, I am come to send peace on earth? I tell you, nay; but rather division.* This, he saw, would eventually take place, from the enmity that there is between truth and falsehood; between a worldly spirit, and that of his Gospel. But his Gospel was no more calculated in its natural tendency to introduce any one evil, than the spirit of love and peace, is disposed to promote hatred and discord! *The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father,* i. e. the infidel father, would have an enmity against his believing son: and the infidel son, would have an enmity against his believing father. No enmity would be indulged in the mind of the true Christian. And there is not one doctrine that teacheth, or inspires with *ill-will* towards men, that can be grounded on the New Testament Writings. So that *they have*

not been any part of the disease. But the accusation is very unjust. It is so, tho' difference of opinion may, and will have place among good men, who believe the Gospel: since their difference must be in lesser matters, and cannot affect the spirit of true religion, which is, love of God, and love of men. But *uncharitableness*, the offspring of pride, that will injure men in their reputation, properties, or persons, on account of their private opinions, is of the devil; and not of Christianity: and will effectually damn the most orthodox, as such men usually think themselves. See *Luke* xii. 45, 46.

I know not how the above charge, brought against the Gospel, can be made to agree with a testimony before given, "*It may perhaps be a piece of justice due to Christianity, to acknowledge that it yields a much clearer light, and is a more safe guide to mankind, than any other traditionary religion: as being better adapted to improve and perfect human nature.*" Or with Christianity defined to be, *that revelation of God's will, which Christ was in a peculiar and special manner sent to acquaint the world with.*—

Sec. V. More difficulties, — *Seeing it is an obvious defect in any human composition to be expressed so loosely, as that fair and honest enquirers may draw the most opposite conclusions from it; and that this should be the case of a divine revelation is scarce supposable. However the question at present is, whether this fountain of confusion and contradiction, viz. the New Testament, which is now considered to be the Christian revelation, be proved to be a divine revelation by the evidence of miracles.* Ibid. p. 247.

Sec. V.
The New
Testament a
fountain
of confusion
and contradiction.

What apology shall I make for my author, who appeared in the former chapter under the idea of a Christian? I would wipe off this stain, if

if I was able. But,—truth demands, that I confess, the citation is too full against the former portraite. The New Testament, a fountain of confusion and contradiction!—*too loosely* expressed to be the case of a divine revelation!

Mark is said, ch. iv. 11, 12. *to represent our Lord as wilfully and designedly teaching the people in such a way, as that he himself judged the true end of it's instructions would not, nor could be answered upon them: and that he did it with this view, and to answer this end, viz. to prevent their being converted and saved;—but then Mr. Chubb adds, this cannot be true.* V. II. p. 181, 182.

Sec. VI.
Christ intended not to be understood.

Instruction by parables was the plainest and most familiar way, as well as the least offensive, for the conveyance of truth. Since by similitudes, drawn from things under daily observation, the reproof couched under them, or the exhortation, would not have the *same quantity* of prejudice to combat, as if spoken without figure. Moreover, the particular and special doctrines of Christ's ministrations and kingdom were represented and inculcated with more advantage, than if they had been naked, and unclothed of figure. And the difference between the instructions given to the twelve Apostles, lay, in his setting before them such views of his person, mission and office, which the multitude were no way fitted to receive. He taught publicly therefore the plainest things, and in the most popular, and striking manner: so that if they were not informed by his teachings, it was because their vices and prejudices had shut up all the avenues of light from their understandings. And hence it is, that he reproves his disciples for not receiving such easy instructions, when the great

mysteries of the Kingdom were designed to be communicated to them.

A careful attention, would have shewn, that *Mark* intends not to be so understood; but by those verses, 11, 12, 13, the contrary is evident.—*Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive, and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them: q. d. they are thus left absolutely without any excuse, if they attend not unto, and receive my doctrine: It will prove, that they make no use of their understandings: and that their obstinacy occasions this stupidity. They would not be converted, nor have their sins pardoned by me.—He speaks of those who treated his ministrations with contempt! those without; men who came to ensnare him; the ill-designing and captious, whom he always put to silence; the dupes of power!*

Señ. VII. Has Mr. *Chubb* said any thing in support of Mr. C's. this black character he has given of the New Testament? He thought he had. Ay, and in support of his charge, the branch too of the *Christian morals*.

Some of the most remarkable precepts he has controverted, I will lay before my reader.

Christ's precepts. *Matt. v. 38. compared with Exod. xxi. 23, 24, 25. upon which Mr. Chubb observes, that if such a retaliation of injuries, was proper to restrain mens vitiated appetites under one dispensation, it must be under all; whereas Jesus Christ reversed the aforesaid law of retaliation. V. I. p. 10.*

It will be proper, at once, to shew the fallacy of his reasonings on this, and many other precepts, by observing, that Mr. *Chubb* has grossly mista-

mistaken the very express language of our Lord. He does not once refer to any one *Mosaic* law, in any of those rules of moral conduct, that he reverses; but to the traditionary sense of the Jew-elders. He says not, *it is written in your law*, as he does, *Mark ix. 13. Luke x. 26. John x. 34.* He only says, *Ye have heard that it hath been said: and, it hath been said by them of old time.* Besides, at *ver. 17.* he bids them not think, *that he came to destroy the law or the prophets, I came not to destroy, but to fulfil.* And he prefaceth his corrections of those vile maxims-received among them, *ver. 20.* by telling them, *that except their righteousness did exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, they should in no case enter the kingdom of Heaven.*

And with respect to the *Mosaic* law referred to, it was not, could not be literally understood; but intended a valuation should be made of the injury, and the injurious should be put under a mulct or penalty by the magistrate.

But then Mr. *Chubb* dislikes the moral injunction, *ver. 39. of not resisting evil;* and he concludes, *that an universal non-resistance of evil, is for the benefit of mankind, than a proper non-resistance.* Vol. I. p. 14.

We will grant him the conclusion: but then he deny, that his premises are just, or that he has done justice to the sense of our Lord. Jesus never intended to be understood, as giving directions in matters of *civil*, or of *national* rights, that might be controverted: but he is speaking of persons, who, upon embracing his doctrine, would be exposed to the anger, hatred, malice, envy and rage of bigots, and worldly men. And he enjoins patience, meekness, in the persecuted; non-resistance to the persecutor.—That this is his obvious sense, will appear to any impartial reader,

reader, who compares the design of his mission and kingdom, and the nature of his apostles commission, *Luke xii. 14. John xviii. 36. xvii. 14. xv. 18, 19.*

To *Matth. v. 33.* Mr. Chubb objects; because our Lord says, *Swear not at all.*—whereas religious swearing, he says, *contributes more to the support of truth and mutual confidence, than non-swearing; so, in this instance, Christian morals are less excellent and perfect, than those morals, that come in competition with them.* Ib. p. 18.

This happens to have as little foundation, as the other objection: for our Lord has no such meaning as to forbid religious, but only irreligious swearing. This is manifest from the very letter of the text, where he immediately explains himself, by various instances; *neither by heaven, for it is God's throne: nor by the earth, for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King: neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.* These instances shew, that by *not swearing at all*, this divine teacher would be understood to mean, a prohibition of their absurd, stupid, superstitious oaths: dishonourable to the great object of worship! and with which they larded their common conversation. He does not once say *swear not by God*; but *swear not at all* by things or beings below him. This is the very design of those prohibitions, he gives against such impious oaths. And in the nature of an oath there is an appeal made to a Being, that is the almighty patron of truth, who will punish perjury: it likewise supposeth the object sworn by to be a perfect judge of our sincerity.

Besides, this same Jesus, of whom Mr. Chubb expresses an high opinion, did, in a great number of instances make open appeals to God, *fath*

father, which were of the very nature of oaths. See *Matthew* xi. 25. xvii. 1. *John* viii. 18. and 25. So that when Mr. *Chubb* affirms, that religious swearing was allowed, and appointed by *Moses's law*: yet *Christ* forbade it, Vol. I. p. 16, 17. he has not said the truth.

His remarks on *Matthew* v. 43. which would represent our Lord as reversing the precept in part, ver. 44, 45. Ib. page 18, 19. are groundless.

There is no such precept in the *Mosaic law*, as, *thou shalt love thine neighbour, and hate thine enemy*. Tho' the *Jew-elders* had given this gloss in their traditions: which, probably, they had supported upon their forefathers having been made the executioners of God's displeasure upon enormously wicked nations. Which measures of providence do only appear to me vindicable, from the tendency they had to impress them the more strongly with the malignity that there is in vice and impiety. Those nations that they were to extirpate, were not to be considered as devoted by God to destruction, because of being peculiarly their enemies, but the enemies of God; and as such, the enemies of mankind in general: avowing principles and practices subversive of all order, and the peace of the world. Let any one read the xviiiith chap. of *Levit.* and he must see, that the *Jews* were themselves obnoxious to the same destruction, if they committed those abominable customs, which the devoted nations committed.

There could not be any such precepts delivered by *Moses* from God, as that *thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy*; when understood to respect the retributions due to the enemies of God: for vengeance and recompence belong to God only. *He will render vengeance*

on

on his enemies, and will reward them who hate him. He will avenge the blood of his servants, and render vengeance to his adversaries. See Deut. xxxii. 35, 41, 43. Hence it is plain, that the Jews were forbid, of themselves, undertaking to vindicate the rights of God's government, by a voluntary destruction even of his adversaries, unless under his express direction: and then, they were not to consider themselves as the avengers, but as the instruments of his displeasure. But when they had a commission from him to destroy, they were not to express such reluctance as would discover pity, or lead them to spare the devoted, Deut. vii. 16. *no, not a son, or daughter, or the wife of the bosom, if they enticed them secretly to idolatry*, Deut. xiii. 8, 9. which shews, that the execution of God's displeasure, when signified, must be complied with, as well against one another, as against other nations. And in neither case did suppose an hatred of men, as men; but a religious regard to the orders of their sovereign. Nor did it shew that the Israelites were a people void of humanity; for the reason, that their pity and compassion in such given cases, were equally prohibited, and under such vindictive threatnings.

And indeed the fundamental principles of the Mosaic constitution, will not admit any such precept, as that, of *thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy*; for they are no other than these, *thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, &c. and thy neighbour as thyself*, Deut. vi. 15. Lev. xix. 18. on these two commandments, our Lord has observed, *hang all the law and the prophets*. Benevolence is the only motive and principle that gives energy or force to all law: as it comports with the end of man's being, viz. happiness.

There

There is then no such thing as Christ having reversed in part a moral precept, when he says, *love your enemies*, &c. for he has a reference to men being the enemies of Christians, only because of their Christianity. But if men are enemies to Christians as men, abstracted from the idea of their profession, they are then the enemies of mankind in general; and the overt acts of their enmity, it concerns civil society to take cognizance of. Nor has any Christian man the least authority to forgive a thief, or a robber, or a man that would take away his life, merely from a murderous intention. Christ never intended, that his disciples should love *such* enemies: nor would he discourage a reasonable, just defence of civil property; or interrupt the natural course of distributive justice. He has not required, that any man should exercise a love of complacency, even upon an enemy, who is so, upon account merely of a religious profession: but what he enjoins, is, a love of pity, a pious concern and compassion for him. Yet, if an *Infidel-Jew* would smite a *Christian-Jew* on the cheek, or sue him at the law, he was not to contend; because he would be sure of having no justice done him.

An objection is made to *Matthew* vi. 19, 25, 26,—28 and 31. Mr. Chubb thinks, *that mens thoughtfulness, care, and concern for, and their laying up of earthly, and heavenly treasures are to be so greatly disproportionate, as that the former will appear almost as nothing, when compared with the latter. But that man's present condition calls for much thoughtfulness, application and diligence.—that if the former be the case, then it gives for Christian morals; but if the latter be the case, then it gives it against Christian morals.*
Vol. I. pag. 21, 24.

H

This

This same writer has laid down a rule, which, by his authority, we may make use of. He says, *We must distinguish carefully of Christ's words, whether literally or figuratively to be understood: respecting doctrinals.*—V. II. p. 287. *The like caution must be taken concerning precepts.* Ib. p. 289.

All the figure here, that needs explaining, is in those words, *lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven,—and take no thought.*—This latter instruction is only a *comparative* way of speaking, when a rule to Christians in general: *q. d.* do not have a *first solicitude* and concern about them, a care that *divides* the mind;—an anxiety. But if we consider the words more accurately, perhaps, there will be no need of understanding them figuratively; since they are put in opposition to the general pursuit of *Gentile* nations, who made present enjoyments the great subject of their religious supplications of their Deities! see ver. 32. And as to the injunction of *not laying up* treasures for themselves on earth, there needs little to be said in justification of the precept; forasmuch as treasures for ourselves, having the heart with them; regarded as it's stay and confidence, are very unfitly those of an earthly kind, as they are subject to decay, and violence. And I much question, whether Mr. *Chubb* did not practise himself upon the Christian rule: for notwithstanding his diligence and application to procure a competency of the good things of this life, they were not his treasure. At least, I do not think his heart was fixed on them: but that he had much more pleasure in a beneficent distribution of them, than he had in the quantity of money he had accumulated. And if he did not place his happiness in what he acquired of these things; but in the friendly use he made of them, they

were

were not his treasure : and he, in his own practice, justified this precept. Yet, had Mr. Chubb been one of our Lord's audience, and a disciple of his, he might have seen the great propriety of the precept most strictly understood ; for to what purpose should the disciples amass riches, when they could have no manner of security of quiet possession ? They would be constantly liable to seizure, and sequestration, by edicts from the Sanhedrim. It was the case during our Lord's ministry, viz. *The Jews had agreed, that if any man did confess that Jesus was the Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue*, John ix. 22, compared with chap. xii. 42.

This single consideration of a proscription, or excommunication, because of their owning Jesus to be the Christ, which exposed their substance to sequestration, would have rendered needless all that Mr. Chubb has said in a note, vol. I. pag. 21, 22. against our Lord's requiring of the rich man, that if he would become a subject of his kingdom, he must sell all that he had, and give it to the poor. Besides, many other reflections might have been spared, that have been thrown out with freedom, by some writers, upon the Christians at first selling their estates, and having all things in common.

Those reflections made upon the apostles, as *having a fair prospect of, and a very plausible pretence, for gathering great riches into their hands, as keepers and managers of the church's property and treasure ; and the judgment on Ananias and Sapphira* ; vol. II. pag 107—110. are too loose and groundless to need any laboured confutation. The first Christians were convinced of the propriety of having *all things common*, in their special circumstances. And their being so, did itself prove, that the apostles had no opportunity

of amassing riches to themselves. *St. Peter* expressly says, *that silver and gold he had none*, tho' they had all things in common : compare *Acts* iii. 6. with ii. 44, 45. Yet, if a man is determined to make uncharitable reflections, on any fact recorded in history, he may do it, without ground ; nay, against the very letter of it. And no writer can be secure from defamation, nor any character from the vilest aspersions.

But one would not have expected, that a man, who pleads for integrity, should find fault with a miracle wrought to detect *insincerity*, as was the case of that on *Ananias* and *Sapphira* ; whose crime lay, in attempting to impose on the *charismata*, or the holy spirit, that so apparently had furnished the apostles with power, and an extraordinary discernment of spirits. Besides, there was no compulsion, but what they brought, was of their own choice. And they might have declared, that it was but *a part* of their substance, with the utmost safety. Whereas the declaration which they made, was false : and the judgment upon them, was an example of the abhorrence, which the Christian religion has of *lying*.

One great reason of the growth of infidelity, is, that men do not honestly attend to the circumstances of the people and times, in which the New Testament histories were written : which circumstances are related in those histories, as a key to their sense and meaning. *E. gr.* the effusion of the spirit at *Pentecost*, and the miraculous death of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, would spread an awe and dread on the *Jewish* nation ; and will account for the liberty which the Christians had in *Judea*, of disposing of their possessions ; tho' the government was ill-disposed towards them.

Respect-

Respecting these precepts, under consideration, they express great wisdom and goodness; since they lead men to consider themselves as designed for more substantial enjoyments, than what are perishing. And they enable a man, in the way of his duty, using his talents with an honest diligence, to depend on the compassionate care of his heavenly Father; who best knows, what degree of affluence or prosperity in this world will conduce most to his virtue and happiness.

And how many are the instances of wretchedness, and infelicity, from men's not acting upon these generous, substantial, pious principles? What instances should we have of chagrine, disquietude, melancholly, and self-murder, if men had a just sense, and due veneration of these precepts?

A censure has been passed upon *Luke xiv. 12*, *Sec. VII.*
3. This, he says, requires Christians to deny *Luke xiv.*
themselves of that pleasure and satisfaction which *12, 13-*
arise from entertaining and being entertained by *censured,*
friends, relations, and neighbours, and those of *as forbid-*
our own rank, and which perhaps is one of the *dng*
principal enjoyments of life; and to confine them- *friendly*
selves to the poor, the lame, the maimed and the *entertain-*
blind; that is, to the necessitous only. *ments.* Vol. I.
p. 24, 25.

Had the instruction been carefully examined, it would have conveyed no such idea. But our Lord would have been considered as at the table of one of the chief Pharisees; probably, a member of the Sanhedrim: in whom Christ discovered a pharisaical ostentation in his entertainments. He would have it esteemed an evidence of his piety, an instance of a charitable, beneficent conduct. For it is manifest that the *Pharisee* looked upon his generous entertainment as meritorious; or as what

what entitled him to a recompence, *at the resurrection of the just*. Hence it was that our Lord does, in so friendly a way, give him instruction: shewing him his mistake, and pointing out to him the method of attaining the end he would aim at. *When thou makest a dinner, or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor rich relations; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, &c. and thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.*

Charity would not be so properly expressed, in giving bread where the duties of affinity and blood demand relief, as a piece of natural justice, more properly than of mercy: and where the compliment could, or would be returned, there was nothing like charity or mercy in it. But there is something so very amiable in this piece of conduct, that one might have expected the highest encomiums upon the good-nature, the generous, open friendship which it does express. No other motive, but that of disinterested goodness, could have inclined the heart of Jesus, in such circumstances, to have delivered this instruction. And his wisdom and prudence are very illustrious!

What must we think of Mr. C.'s treatment of this instruction? *Was not his penetration such, as could discover connections and relations where there are none in nature; and his abilities such, that he could constitute or dissolve connections and relations at pleasure, and that merely to exhibit an ill-natured reflection, or for the sake of a gibe?* We shall presently find him yet more liable to this very censure, that he has passed upon others. And wherever the charge does fix, there is a very great degree of immorality.

A very flagrant instance of Mr. C.'s not reading with any care, we have in his mistaking our Lord's inveterate enemies for his disciples; even at the time of their enmity, viz. the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, upon whom he is pronouncing a repeated woe, see *Matt. xxiii.* and *Luke xith* chapters. *Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites: for ye pay tithe of mint, anise, and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.* Sec. VIII.

Upon no other authority, Mr. C. says, *And Jesus Christ not only paid obedience to Moses's law in his own person, but likewise required his disciples to yield obedience to the most insignificant branches of it, such as paying tithes of mint, anise, and cummin.* Vol. II. p. 169. Christ is said to enjoin an observance of Mosaic rituals.

I ask, were these Christ's disciples? or did he enjoin such tithes upon these his enemies? or does it appear, that such tithes being paid, could be in obedience to *Moses's* law?

To the first question, the answer is undeniably plain, they were not our Lord's disciples. To the second, it seems as plain, that he gave them no precept to observe such custom. For though our Lord said, *These things ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone*; as in our translation: yet, by the whole construction of his address, it appears, that he is reproving them for, and reproaching them with their *hypocrisy*. He points out the absurdity of their conduct, in laying a mighty stress on a trifle; and neglecting things of everlasting importance. It can only intend, at the most, that they, the hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees, were under obligation not to omit, what they so religiously enjoined others to observe. Altho' nothing was more common for them, than to lay burdens upon others, enough

nough to load their shoulders, which they would not themselves take so much of, as would require the strength of a single finger, v. 4th of *Matt. xxiii.* compared with the 46th verse of *Luke* the xith.

But the *Greek* runs thus, ταῦτα εἶδει ποιεῖναι, καὶ κενὰ μὴ ἀφίεναι; and a *Critic* has observed, that the verb, ἀφίεναι, here rendered, *left undone*, properly signifies, *the removal of a thing from its place.* Propriè & primigenio significatu est, à se amovere, *Leigh's Crit. Sac.* And frequently the word stands for *suffering*, or *permitting* of a thing: so the *Lexicographers.* The sentences then would have been better translated, *these things ought ye to have done, and not to have removed the other from their place; q. d. you ought not to have permitted any religious sense to have been given them: but such blind guides are you, as to take great pains to filter for a gnat, when your throats are wide enough to swallow a camel.*

So it is that we have an answer to the third question, viz. whether such tithes being paid, did express obedience to the *Mosaic* law? and we see it did not. There is no such law in all the *Pentateuch*, but the custom had its rise from *Pharisaical* superstition, which carried the laws of tythes much beyond their proper limits; and made them extend even to the *Kitchen-garden.*

Which way soever, we view the text, there is an egregious mistake committed by a writer, who has affirmed, *that common sense, and common honesty best qualify a man for judging of all pretences, and all pretenders to religion and divine revelation.* Vol. II. p. 132.

Sec. IX.
St. John
is said, to
encourage
Christians
fin.

Upon the 1 *John* ii. 1, 2. Mr. C. says, *It is but for a man to apply to himself the words of St. John, and the practice of vice is made easy to him.—* His paraphrase is as follows, *My little children,*

sin, or disobedience to God's laws, is disreputable, and justly blameable, I, therefore write these things unto you, that ye sin not; nevertheless, if any of you sin, let him not be troubled, let him not be affected; for, we Christians have an advocate with the father, &c. Vol. I. p. 37.

I will propose a more just and natural paraphrase; "*My little children, I write unto you, that ye sin not. This is the end of my writing to you, and the rules I lay down will prevent your sinning, if you will behave upon them. But if any man sin, any man who has not embraced the Gospel, and you see him sensible of it, tell him, that we Christians have an advocate with the father, Jesus Christ the righteous; whose doctrine, and personal ministration, [he being appointed of God, the resurrection and the life,] is not only propitious to us; but will be so to the whole world, that shall embrace his Gospel.*"

There is a manifest change of persons in the expressions, *my little children, and any man*. So that it cannot, by any means, be applicable to Christians, *if any man sin*: because St. *John* writes to Christians, that *they sin not*. And the whole drift of his Epistle, is to prove their indispensable obligation to keep God's word, or to do his will. The intention is to shew them the evil of sin. And the whole inculcates a love of God, and a love of man, the only principles that can secure an uniform virtue.

The calumny cast on St. *John's* instruction, is very glaring.

One would be astonished to find a modest man, such as Mr. *Chubb* is said to have been, losing himself so far, as to affirm confidently, and with a sneer too, several things, for which he has no manner of foundation. For example, *Luke* mentions the *seventy* sent out by our Lord, besides the *twelve*. This Mr. *Chubb* says, is expressly

Sec. X.
Luk's
account of
the Seven-
ty cen-
sured.

contradicted by St. Matthew, ch. x. and by St. Mark, ch. vi. both of which say, that it was the twelve disciples, which Christ sent forth to preach as aforesaid; and that these three historians refer to the same thing is most obvious from the relations themselves. Vol. I. pag. 377.

This cannot be true; unless it will necessarily follow, that because *Matthew, Mark, and Luke* harmonizing in their accounts of the *twelve*, therefore *Jesus* did not also send out *seventy* upon a like commission. If indeed it could be made appear, from their histories, that our Lord had no more disciples than *twelve*, the thing would be obvious. But this is not proveable; for the contrary is evident: see *John* ii. 23. πολλοί, many, at the passover, believed on him, when they saw the miracles that he did. And it is probable, that he made many disciples, wherever he continued to work miracles; for *St. Matthew* tells us, that he did not many mighty works in his own country, because of their unbelief, *Matt.* xiii. 58. which is a strong intimation, that where he did many mighty works, he had more success. And that he did many, thro' the whole of his ministry, is evident from his history. There is then no objection can arise to the credit of *Luke's* account, from his not having many more disciples than the twelve apostles. And it is no more incredible, or improbable from it's being only mentioned by *St. Luke*, than any other fact is, mentioned only by one historian, of good reputation, and no way in itself improbable, tho' others may have omitted it. Besides, *St. Luke's* history has nothing in it, as we shall hereafter notice, that has the least tendency to lessen his credit, as an intelligible, capable, faithful historian. It is not improbable, what some have conjectured; that he himself was one

of the *seventy*; and therefore the fittest person of all the evangelists to make mention of it. Moreover, their commission being the same with that of the twelve, there was the less occasion for the others to notice it. Might not Mr. *Chubb* with the same reason have objected to the twelve being sent out, when *John*, one of the twelve, and who wrote his history after the others had been written, makes no mention at all of that mission?

Yet, we are told, that the historian, in writing the acts of the apostles, has mistaken *one hundred*, or thereabouts, in *an hundred and twenty*, Acts i. *The number one hundred, may, I think, be justly suspected to be an interpolation; not only, because one hundred and twenty, seems to be a number much too large for the body of the disciples before mentioned, nor can it be supported by any other part of the history; but also, because it seems, at least, to be contrary to the account which immediately precedes it, that was given by this very historian, with respect to which, about twenty seems to be a much more probable computation; and therefore, one hundred, probably, has been added.* Vol. I. page 379.

Sec. XI.
A mistake
of about
100, in
the num-
ber 120.

I am apprehensive that this will appear to be an instance of the most shameful treatment of an history, and of an historian, that can be imagined.

The *Evangelists*, to whom we must refer for the accounts of our Lord's success in his ministry, and which are to furnish us with a rule of judging what numbers there might be, either sufficient, or not sufficient to credit this account; they assure us, that such were their numbers, that the *Sanhedrim* were jealous about *Jesus*, and published edicts, *that whosoever did openly confess him to be the Christ, should be put out of the synagogue.* St. *John* reports, that the *Pharisees* said among

themselves, *perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him*, ch. xii. 19. If their reports may be regarded, there must have been disciples enough to support the credit of this historian; who begins his history after the time of the facts had had place. And it is idle and trifling to say, *it cannot be supported by any other part of this history*: for suppose the historian had mentioned no number of disciples *previous* to this account, it would not at all have affected the credit of this account of the number. Neither is there any thing in what he has aforementioned, that can do it the least injury. Our Lord's chief business, after his resurrection, was with the twelve apostles: these therefore are more emphatically mentioned, as assembled together, verses 4 and the 13th. But at verse 11, the two angels, in the form of men, address the people thus, *Ye men of Galilee*.—There might be, according to this account, a *multitude* convened at the place, as well as the twelve apostles; tho' they only are expressly mentioned. And Mr. Chubb has supposed, from this history, that there might be *about twenty*. But if he can allow *nine* more than the number of apostles, why not nine hundred more?

And truly St. Paul has assured us, that our Lord was seen of above *five hundred* brethren at once; and that the greater part were living at the time he wrote the account, tho' some others were dead, 1 Cor. xv. 6. It is infinitely more probable, that our Lord had five hundred or a thousand disciples, than that he had but *twenty*.

Sec. XII.
The number 500, condemned.

This account of *five hundred*, is said, *was carrying the matter too far, and is like straining the string 'till it breaks*. Vol. I. p. 380.

A man disposed, may say any thing, that his prejudices shall suggest: but where is the argument?

ment? Would so good a writer as St. Paul have unnecessarily exposed himself and his writings to contempt, by giving a number far beyond the truth? and at a time too, when he might with the utmost ease have been detected? This is not credible. Nay, Mr. Chubb says, *that he intends not to lead his readers into a neglect of the writings of the apostles,—much less to lay them aside.* Yet, has he not, in these things, exposed his own writings, and made his farewel a very unaccountable one?

He has been pleased to say further, *that the apostles became Jews to Jews, by assimilating Christianity to Judaism, that thereby they might render Christianity agreeable to them.* Vol. II. p. 304.

Sec. XIII.
St. Paul
said to
conduct
on false;
hood.

But surely, this could not intend, that they took any methods, or made any concessions, that were repugnant to moral truth, or to the genius and spirit of Christianity. If they did, I know not how to defend such conduct. I am persuaded, it is not the meaning of St. Paul, when he said, *I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means gain some,* 1 Cor. ix. 22. for he thus explains himself; *unto the Jews, I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews: to them that are under the law, i. e. as I understand, proselytes, that he might gain them. To those that are without law, as without law, viz. to Gentiles.* But that none might mistake him, he says, such was his conduct, that he discovered no immorality—*being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ—that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak, became I as weak, that I might gain the weak.*

In these several articles the apostle must be understood as doing nothing immoral. He went not into any conformities, that the purity of the Christian doctrine would condemn; yet making all such

such concessions, and forbearances, that he saw were most likely to win upon the different people with whom he conversed. The apostle abhorred *lying*, as an unworthy, base method of promoting the truth of God, see *Rom. iii. 5, 6, 7.* And he says, ver. 8. *that their damnation is just*, who affirm of him, *he taught that men might do evil, that good may come.* He forbids Christians *lying one to another*, *Col. iii. 9.* and describes the *speaking lyes in hypocrisy*, i. e. under a religious cover, as the mark of a *seared conscience*, *1 Tim. iv. 2.*

The faulty behaviour of *Peter*, reversed the conduct of *St. Paul*, *Gal. ii. 14.* since *Peter*, tho' he lived after the manner of the *Gentiles*, and not as do the *Jews*, respecting distinction of meats; yet, he would compel the *Gentiles* to live as the *Jews*.

Mr. Chubb must have seen, had he been careful, that he has only indulged an imagination full of fiction, and deceit, in the false playings of it: for no man has written with a more uniform regard to moral truth, and its importance, than *St. Paul*; nor with a nobler spirit for liberty, and the general good of mankind. He has never once thought of dispensing with truth, in any case: so that the false miracles pretended to, in the *Church of Rome*, will admit of no comparison with those wrought by this apostle. And in what way one may reconcile *Mr. Chubb's* asking, how it will be proved that the miracles, wrought by Christ and his apostles, were any other than impositions? with what he has elsewhere said of Christ's superior power, and the probability of God's working miracles by him; and that they doubtless were for the benefit of mankind; I say, how to make these things consistent, I understand not.

Another

Another observation will be proper in this place, viz. this writer has said, *That St. Paul's honesty is gone, Act. xxiii. 6. that he condemns himself for it, ch. xxiv. 20, 21. and yet, that he reassumes the thing he had condemned himself for,* Sec. XIV. St. Paul's honesty farther im-peached. ch. xxvi. 5, 6, 7. Vol. II. p. 235, 237.

There is not the least difficulty, in my opinion, lies before us. For notwithstanding *Paul* used the method he did, *Act. xxiii. 6.* in order to divert the fury of his adversaries, and divide them; yet, it was strictly true, that the whole of the prejudice which the *Jews* had against him, was owing to his preaching, that *Christ* was risen from the dead, whom they had vilely murdered. This it was, that pointed their rage against him, so that he with the strictest truth said, *of the hope and resurrection of the dead, I am judged, or censured,* for so the word (*κρινομαι*) properly signifies. This was the basis of their resentment, and no charge of falsehood, or prevarication can possibly fix against *Paul*; because he with so much address, and with such honest skill, diverts the passions of his accusers from himself, and occasions the fire of them to be played off against one another. This would have been applauded, as a piece of masterly oratory in any one of the most celebrated of antient *Greece* or *Rome*, under like circumstances.

And with respect to *Acts xxiv. 20, 21.* where he defends himself before *Felix*, any unprejudiced person, who has common sense, and reads with a small degree of care, will plainly see, that *St. Paul* designs no such thing as a censure upon his own conduct, but a justification of it; tho' an ironical treatment of the *Jew*-prejudices is intended. Nor does it appear, that *Felix*, or any other, understood it as an exception to *Paul's* moral character. *If they have found any evil do-*

ing in me, while I stood before the council, except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, touching the resurrection of the dead, I am judged, or censured by you this day. Now, had Felix enquired into the use which they had made of that declaration of Paul's; what would have been the consequence? why only this: it would have appeared, that the Pharisees, without carrying their ideas farther than the doctrine of the resurrection in general, had acquitted Paul, Acts xxiii. 9. So that his mentioning this, under the form of an exception, was a delicacy, that overthrew all the force of their charge, and at once confounded the whole of their laboured schemes to fix blame upon him.

Nevertheless, Mr. Chubb observes, that as there is nothing in the accusation brought against Paul, of his preaching the doctrine of the resurrection, neither does it appear, that there was, or could be any place for it; seeing the preaching that doctrine, could not be deemed criminal by the Jews; but it seems to have been a forced case — yet he stood to it, and represented it to be the ground of those troubles that beset him; probably the better to conceal the true cause of his misfortunes, and which possibly he might be ashamed of. Vol. I. P. 331.

The fallacy of this representation is manifest: because the great employment of Paul, as an apostle, was to declare and prove the certainty of Christ's resurrection, which is the principal fact in the Gospel history. Neither can it be made appear that any part of Tertullus's charge was capable of the least proof. St. Paul denies every tittle; and from the conduct of his very judges, his *innocency* was perfectly clear, and his merit illustrious! Neither does Paul deny, but he owns, Acts xxiv. 15. that many of his accusers

fers did themselves also allow, *that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.* Notwithstanding this, the reason of their malicious prosecution, was, what respected a doctrine he taught of *the resurrection of the dead, viz. Christ's own resurrection, and his being, by God's designation, his instrument that shall raise all the dead.* Had he not been an apostle, or teacher of this doctrine, he would not have been called a pestilent fellow, or a mover of sedition: but this galled his accusers, *viz. his being a ring-leader of the sect of the Nazarenes.*

What use has Mr. Chubb made of his penetration and ability, in the above case; let any impartial reader judge. Has he not dissolved connections and relations at pleasure, merely to exhibit an ill-natured reflection? I fear he has.

However, it seems, that *Acts xxi. 20—28.* is called a deception, *viz. Paul's* purifying himself with four *Jew*-converts that were under a vow. The historian tells us, that the Elders at *Jerusalem*, perceiving that myriads of *Jews*, who had embraced Christianity, were yet zealous of the law; these had conceived great prejudices against this apostle, because he had every where taught among the *Gentiles*, that they were under no obligation to circumcision, nor to walk after *Jew*-customs. They therefore advise that he, a *Jew* by family and nation, should, in order to abate the popular prejudices against him, go into the Temple, and conform to some *Mosaic*-rituals. He did so, but by the false reports of some bigots, he has a commotion raised against him, as if he had contradicted his own practice and doctrine with the *Gentiles*, and had taken some of them into the Temple along with him. Whereas there was no foundation for the report, more than that of his having been seen before with *Trophimus*,

an *Ephesian*, in the city; whom they supposed he had taken with him into the Temple, though he had not. This instance, is perfectly consistent with truth, and with the practice and doctrine of this apostle, who thus *to the Jew, became as a Jew*, observing such rituals as yet belonged to the temple-worship: tho' he knew that the time was coming when the temple worship *should cease for ever*. I doubt not, but *Paul* performed this ritual with a suitable temper; and the design of it was evidently such, as he saw would justify him. It was no acknowledgment of the obligation that *Gentile* christians were under, nor that he himself had any obligation to observe, as a christian-apostle; but only as a brother-*Jew*, who thereby owned, that that constitution had been of God: and which *Jew*-christians might be indulged in their observance of, till that *polity* was destroyed. It was a concession which he made to the prejudices of weaker christians; and what he saw, his brethren, the apostles of the circumcision, could not avoid a connivance of. The thing was done in compliance with the desire of the elders, and not at all as binding, farther than a mean of allaying the popular prejudices. *To the weak, became he as weak, that he might gain the weak*.

To have acted otherwise would have been capable of no defence, but must have exposed him to just censure: either as a stiff, surly bigot, or as one that would, by his own authority, pull down all the *Jew*-ritual, whilst providence did continue the standing of their temple, and the face of their polity. But *St. Paul* knew better, and behaved like a man of consummate prudence, and good-nature. An affability, and courteousness, an exemplary modesty adorns his whole history, and shine throughout his writings.

They

They most wickedly treat St. *Paul's* character, who pretend to vindicate, upon his example, their dissimulations, their equivocations, double doctrines, and all other juggling tricks, in order to secure their *popularity*! He never violated any one truth, contradicted himself, or put a veil upon his doctrine; either from a love of applause, or from a fear of losing the esteem of men.

A similar article of conduct, with that above, we have in this apostle, when he circumcised *Timothy*, whose Mother was a *Christian Jewess*; which he did, *because of the Jews that were in those quarters*, viz. of *Derbe* and *Lystra*, Acts xvi. *beg.* The *Jews* were prejudiced against him, because of his Father being a *Greek*: and *Paul* knew, that by having him circumcised, (which his mother, tho' a *Jewess*, had neglected) the *Jew* prejudices thereby would be removed. Neither did this conduct militate with *Paul's* doctrine, delivered to the *Gentiles*, of the impropriety of circumcision to them. For the *Christian* doctrine laid them under no obligation to observe the laws of *Moses*: and moreover, to have done it, would have been quite out of character. From these considerations it is evident, that *Christianity* was not designed to be a supplement to *Judaism*: but on the other hand, the whole of that constitution would be abolished, with their temple and polity. An event well suited to cure them of their prejudices.—The objection thus appears to be groundless.

His calling *Ananias*, a *whited wall*, is said to be piece of reviling. Even the learned *Le Clerc*, thought it a sign of passion. See his *Five Letters on Inspiration*, pag 45. But did the *Baptist* revile, when he called the *Pharisees* and *Saducees*, a generation

neration of vipers? Did our Lord revile, when he called them both serpents and a generation of vipers? or when he so often called them hypocrites? or did he revile, when he bid the *Pharisees*, go, tell that *fox*, (meaning *Herod*) that tho' he had threaten'd to put him to death, it was not in his power. Did this indicate passion? St. *Paul* intended by *whited wall*, an hypocrite; and *Ananias* was a man of an infamous character. He had, before this, been sent prisoner to *Rome*, for his misbehaviour. And during his office he had so cruelly defrauded the inferior priests, that some of them perished for want.

And as to *Paul's* saying, that God would smite him, this was a prediction of the unhappy death he should die; for five years after this, he had his house reduced to ashes, by a tumult begun by his own son,—and having in vain attempted to hide himself in an aqueduct, he was dragged out and slain. See Dr. *Doddridge's* notes (*b*) and (*c*).

So when *Paul* says, *I wist not that he was high priest*: he must mean, that he had not acted at all like an high priest, or as one who knew any thing of his office: for he had ordered him to be smitten illegally. So that he had given him no reason to treat him as a person of that sacred character.

This behaviour of St. *Paul's* does not appear, to me, inconsistent either with truth, or the humility of a Christian apostle, who was to bear the name, or authority of *Jesus*, even before Kings. It discovers his fortitude, inasmuch as he could thus undauntedly reprove *Ananias's* illegal proceedings.

See A. XV.
Pique and
resentment in
God
against the
Jews.

Comparing *Acts* xiii. 47. with *Rom.* xi. 11. our author says, *with St. Paul's leave, this is a spring of action much too low, and altogether unworthy of the supreme Deity, whose kindness to his creatures always springs from a much better prin-*

principle, viz. *than that of the Gospel being vouchsafed the Gentiles, from a pique and resentment, which God had taken up against the Jews for rejecting it.*

With Mr. Chubb's leave, the observation is stupid. Forasmuch as *Paul's* commission was to make known to the *Jews first*, wherever he found them, the Gospel scheme : this done, upon their rejecting of it, he turned to the *Gentiles*, as was his duty. But then, upon any of the *Jews* embracing the Gospel, he was not hindered from addressing the *Gentiles* ; forasmuch as they both, by faith, *became one body, under one head.* And upon this stating of the case, runs the argument of the xith to the *Romans*. Some *Jews* did at first embrace the Gospel ; others St. *Paul* was in hopes, would embrace it ; tho' a great part of that nation would be cut off for their impenitency and obstinacy. The *Gentiles* were actually in great numbers, converting to Christianity.—In these circumstances, this Apostle says, *have they stumbled*, that is, the *Jews*, *that they should fall?* that is, the *whole* of them should fall ! *God forbid : but rather that thro' their fall*, who would be destroyed by the *Roman* armies, *Salvation to the Gentiles* : that is, the evidence of the truth of the Gospel would be so conspicuous in the accomplishment of our Lord's prediction, *for to provoke them*, that is, the *Jews*, who should escape that destruction, *unto jealousy.* Now if the fall of them, that is, the *Jew* nation, be the riches of the world, even the decay and diminishing of them the riches of the *Gentiles* ; how much more their fulness ? that is, the remaining *Jews*, in great numbers embracing the Gospel, and so adding to, and enlarging the Christian Church. And this apostle farther says, he useth this sort of address, *that if by any*
2 means,

means, he might provoke his countrymen to emulation, and might save some of them. The very quintessence of good nature, or a divine generosity!

This, I presume, is an unforced, easy, natural paraphrase: and removes all suspicion of pique and resentment. And since it is fairly capable of being thus understood, a little more care and candour should have been expressed, before sentence had been passed upon these apostolic observations.

See. XVI. *The licence taken with St. Paul's Allegory, St. Paul's Gal. iv. 21—26. Vol. I, pag. 267—275. Allegory. which in a note he chargeth with answering the purpose of the crafty and designing!—he might have spared much of his raillery upon, only by turning his eye to a reasoner, with whose writings, I doubt not, he had some acquaintance; I mean Mr. Locke's short and easy paraphrase.*

In this allegory, formed upon Abraham's two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, which he had by a bondmaid, and by his wife Sarah: the design is to be attended to, and the signification of the allegoric terms must be understood, in order to find out St. Paul's meaning.

Mr. Chubb gives no attention to the signification, and evident distinction of the terms, but rallies the allegory with great levity. He will have it, that both Ishmael and Isaac were alike born after the flesh, or begotten. And yet, St. Paul has made an evident distinction in his terms, built upon facts; one was the son of an harlot, and therefore might in that sense, in the pure and chaste language of Scripture, be said to be *born after the flesh*; not being born within the limits of the divine institution of marriage; and the other *after the spirit*, as being born, or begotten lawfully, i. e. within the limits of the divine

vine institution. The distinction would also be supported, from one being begotten in the *ordinary* course of nature ; and the other in consequence of a *preternatural* energy given to the parents : and this too pre-signified by a revelation. The one offspring was emblematical of that *vassalage* which is the certain effect of human lusts and appetites indulged. The other was emblematical of that *liberty*, which is the certain effect of regulating the appetites, and keeping them within the bounds of the divine laws and institutions. Moreover,

By an *allegory*, a known figure in Rhetoric, which is composed of a string of Metaphors, and which meaneth something else, than what the terms are brought to denote : or in which figure, we say one thing, when we design to be understood another : by this same figure, *St. Paul* says, these are *two covenants*. A very common figure, used by the *Jews*, and by all other civilized nations, both antient and modern ;—and yet this is said, by *Mr. Chubb*, to answer the purpose of the *crafty* and *designing*. But, when the apostle calls the two *Covenants*, an *allegory* ; he is only using the terms to support his figure, and not to condemn, or censure the one from mount *Sinai* : on the contrary, he designs to shew, that that covenant from mount *Sinai*, did gender unto bondage, not in it's own nature, and during it's period ; but by the bigotry of the *Jews*, who would yet retain that dispensation, tho' it had it's utmost completion in the Christian, to which it was to give way. He hence, in the prosecution of his allegory, says, that *Agar* is mount *Sinai* in *Arabia*, and ranketh with *Jerusalem*, which is now, and is in bondage with her children : but should anon be abandoned, or cast out as *Agar* was ! because *Jerusalem* which is above, the
 Chris-

Christian dispensation is *free*, which is *the mother of us all!* This free dispensation adopts both *Jew* and *Gentile* into the family of God. And he cites very pertinently a prophecy of *Isaiab*, full to his purpose; *rejoyce thou barren that bearest not, break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate*, those countries that had been as tho' they had had no husband, *bath many more children, than she which bath an husband* *.

I will venture to refer my readers to a comparison of this sense of the allegory, with the sportings of Mr. Chubb's imagination upon it: and am perswaded, that St. Paul has acquitted himself a master of language in this piece of Rhetorical address; he is in no danger of having his character, as a writer, sullied by it.—It grieves one to think, that men should take no more pains to examine into the noblest, the most divine compositions in the world! For tho', as St. Peter has observed, of the things written by his *beloved brother Paul*, *according to the wisdom given him, that there are some things difficult to be understood*; yet, *it is only the unlearned and unstable who wrest them, as they also do the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction*, 2 Ep. iii. 15, 16.

Self. But some particulars are set before us, to lay
 XVII. an emphatical charge of imperfection and blame
 Imperfec- on the revelation: such as Eph. iv. 32. and
 tion and many other texts of like import. Upon which men
 blame em- have raised doctrines repugnant to our natural no-
 phatically tions of things, to the eternal rules of right and
 charged wrong, and represent the Deity as acting contrary
 on the revelation.

* Note, The Design of the Allegory, was, to confute the *Judaizers* boastings in their being the natural descendants of *Abraham*; and in having had the law from *Sinai*, as a perpetual Covenant.

to the moral rectitude of his nature, so they cannot possibly be true; and therefore, surely, may fairly be presumed to be no parts of the Christian revelation.

If Mr. Chubb may be understood to exclude these texts from being a part of the New Testament revelation, as I think he would intimate, his reasoning is not just. For what if learned men have taught a false doctrine from them, this will not prove that the texts themselves do not contain a true one: and there is no room for a question he afterwards puts, *viz. how are we illiterate persons to act, so as to behave properly, and as we ought with regard to them?* for he has himself seen how they are to act; forasmuch as he says, *if justice was done to the text, it would be read thus; forgiving one another, even as God declared, by Jesus Christ, he hath, or will forgive you:* hence, tho' learned men differ, he is a judge which side of the question is most reasonable. And inasmuch as he has produced one sense, that is not repugnant to our natural notions of things, &c. the texts may be considered as parts of the Christian revelation. There is nothing but what is worthy an apostle of Jesus, nothing but what is consistent with his doctrine in any of the exhortations given to Christians, to love one another, and *forgive one another, as God thro' Christ forgave us.* We may be said to be forgiven of God, *thro' Christ*, as we by conforming to the terms of pardon, which he has explained, are qualified for forgiveness: for he has taught, *that if men forgive not one another their trespasses, neither will their heavenly father forgive their trespasses.* And when we add, that God will raise the dead by the ministration of Jesus, we have the last act of forgiveness signified in that event; or God will forgive men thro'

Jesus. Thus we ourselves, do in some measure, remove the weight and load of pain from the offender, by signifying to him our reconciliation.

If men would be content with the doctrine of *Christ's* mediation, as he himself has explained it, they would easily understand all such expressions in the Epistles which relate to it. See *John* xvi. 26, 27, *at that day*, the day of the effusion of the Spirit at Pentecost, to which he evidently refers, *Ye shall ask in my name: And I say not unto you, that I will pray the father for you; for the father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.* Hence it is evident that asking in *Christ's* name, does not suppose, that God is made propitious by *Christ*: but *asking in his name*, must intend, such an asking as *Christ* has authorized, and taught men to make use of in their addresses, viz. asking in the spirit of truth and holiness; and expecting to be heard only upon those terms that are worthy of the father's notice of us. Farther, *Jesus* thus expresseth himself, *I do not say that I will pray the father for you*; q. d. there is no occasion, *for the father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God*, i. e. was commissioned by him. This excludes all those notions of *Christ's* personal ministrations from being the *reason* of God's gracious regards: and shews us, that they are, most properly, the *medium* of God's conveying good things to Christians. The father himself loveth Christians, because they have loved his Son, and received his doctrine, thus believing his mission to be divine. And *Jesus* expressly disclaims any such influence on the father, as to alter his essential love, and goodness. So that when we pray *in Christ's name*, or acknowledge any favours *thro' Christ*, we must mean, if truth guide us, that we ask in the spirit

of

of his *doctrine*; since that is the most express revelation of the will of God.

But if men will talk of *Christ's righteousness*, or of his *blood*, as appeasing the Deity; it will be incumbent on them, to reconcile the immutability of God's goodness, and the express declarations of *Jesus*, with such their apprehensions. We know that God is essential love; that from God's love of the world he sent his Son, which was *prior* to the mission, even as the cause is to the effect. We know that the personal righteousness of *Christ*, is not imputable to any other than himself. *And that whosoever doeth righteousness, is righteous, even as he is righteous.* And as God, thro' the ministrations of *Christ*, does forgive us; so ought we to forgive one another. This is the manifest doctrine of the New Testament, whatever may have been the absurdities which men have built upon it. And we can make a bold appeal to the perfections of God, and to the reason of things for the truth of it.

It might farther be observed, that altho' there are two places in the Epistles which speak of *Christ*, as *interceding*, Rom. viii. 35. and Heb. vii. 25, yet, *his ever-living at the head of power*, gives us the import and meaning of that intercession. His thus existing, in such a sphere of influence, is the sure pledge, exemplar, or exhibited reason of that salvation which God designs for men, who believe in this his own appointment. For the *Greek* word rendered, *intercession*, imports the being, or the existence of a person or thing. *Τύχη*. *Sum. vid. Scapula.*

The *intercession* then imports, the situation of *Jesus*, as made head over all things to his church; by whose ministrations God confers favours on the children of men! but by no means, any such thing as his altering the Deity either by one or

by another kind of supplication; which would imply influencing *motive*. God is the immutable, eternal source of power and of goodness; none but he is essentially good! and *Jesus Christ*, he makes the minister of his blessings. Hence *Jesus* is said, *to be able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him*, i. e. who come by the rules, and in the method he has prescribed.

This I take to be the obvious sense of *Christ's mediation*. And there seems to be nothing in it, unworthy the absolute perfections of the Deity. *Jesus* is not exalted either *above*, or to an *equality* with his God and Father. But has the place which God assigned him: a place of supreme honour and dignity, in reward of his own love of righteousness, and hatred of iniquity! And Christians are exhorted to an imitation of his piety and virtue, as the term of their final acceptance and reward; yea, they are encouraged to expect that they shall share with *Jesus* the honours of his kingdom.

But how any Christians will be able to answer for the hand they have had, in making Christianity offensive to the reason of mankind, by representing *Jesus*, as a *much better* and *more friendly* being, than the eternal God, I cannot conceive. These men should never complain of the growth of infidelity. For if the doctrines of Christianity, are not intelligible, and what will quadrate with reason; or if they are such that the natural powers of man are not commensurate unto: *infidelity*, would, with me, be more eligible than so romantic a faith, as would be implied in the reception of them. For what man in his senses, would embrace the doctrine of transubstantiation? And if any doctrines among Protestants are as repugnant to reason, why should they not be equally abhorred? That must be as

repugnant, which would make *Christ* a more friendly being, than the God of nature!

Moreover, our author breaks out in warm exclamations, upon 1 Cor. xv. 31. and asks, "what confusion of ideas is here?" Vol. II. p. 57.

Note.

See.
XVIII.
Warm
exclama-
tions on
1 Cor. xv.

St. Paul has been mentioning the imminent danger of death, that the Christians were in; they were baptized into a religious profession, which immediately exposed them to persecution. But how very inhuman would it have been, both in him and others, to persuade men to expose themselves so obviously to death, if the dead rise not at all? or why should the apostles thus expose themselves? Upon which he says, *I protest by our rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.* So the margin observes some lections have it, *our*, and not *your* rejoicing. This makes the reading more easy. The apostle contemplating the matter of joy, common to him and other Christians, who were exposed to death, in testimony of the truth of the gospel, thus expresseth himself. And it was pertinent, suitable to the passionateness of his subject. So that one might as well cavil at our Lord's saying, *Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, &c. rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven.* St. Paul behaves upon this very injunction, and discovers the genuine effect which *Christ's* instructions had had upon him.

But the apostles are said sometimes to draw conclusions, which the premises will not support, e. g. 1 Cor. xv. 19. Vol. II. p. 36.

See.
XIX.
Conclu-
sions said
to be

Now, nothing could have been said by St. Paul, in this text, with more justness and propriety: for if the doctrine of a future state was not a *un-
sup-
ported.*

port their behaviour upon, must have put them, by virtue of their profession, into the most wretched condition possible! contending with all difficulties, enduring all evils, and suffering tortures, for no other end than to support a fraud, a lye! *And if in this life they only had hope in Christ, they were, in fact, of all men most miserable.* No one command that *Christ* had laid upon them, to *take up his cross and follow him*, would have been just, much less fit and proper; since the motives he set before them, were all taken from a future state. And had there been no such state, or if they had *only* in this life hope in *Christ*, they would have been undeniably of all men the most miserable. There could be no tendency in Christianity to make men happy, when the great doctrines of it, were all of them deception, falsehood, and a lye: for the miraculous power attending their ministrations, was in attestation of *Christ's* power and designation to raise the dead and judge the world. And yet, the whole a delusion. How very shocking! — *deceived, and deceiving* all men. No comparison can be formed between their condition, and that of the raving enthusiast, who endured every evil under the full persuasion of the truth and reality of his conceits or opinions. But in the apostles, there are no signs of fraud, no marks of mental disorder. They reason well, and act in character. They are exposed to all kinds of persecution and hardships; and they use no mean artifice to evade its force. They were not allowed to pay any man, however powerful and great, the least complaisance, that would militate with their Christian profession, of *having but one God, and owning but one master and Lord.* This made their condition every where perilous: because they taught a new scheme of religion, that would abolish all the

the established religions in the world, and would admit of no mixtures of their rituals. *Pray, what conclusion is here drawn, which the premises will not support? —*

Another text offends, viz. 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10, 11. *See. XX.*
as it is said to savour of Enthusiasm, and to be the 1 Cor. xi.
ground of all that Enthusiasm we have among us. 9, 10, 11.
 Vol. II. p. 50—55. He tells us, St. Paul here *said to*
distinguishes the intelligent principle that takes place be the
in man, and is a part of the human constitution, ground of
and which he calls the spirit of a man which is in enthusi-
him, from another intelligent principle, which he asm.
calls the spirit of God; so he considers all the know-
ledge the former of these can attain to, with re-
gard to the things of God, or christianity, to be by
derivation or communication from the latter.

I will grant that St. Paul does distinguish between the intelligent principle which is a part of the human constitution, and the principle which he calls, the spirit of God; and that all the knowledge which was attainable in the things of christianity was derived from, or communicated by the latter to the former. I find our Lord owning this, when he says, Joh. vii. 16. *My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.* And ch. xii. 49. *For I have not spoken of myself, but the father which sent me, he gave me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak.—v. 50.—* *whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the father hath said unto me, so I speak,* ch. xvii. 8. *for I have given unto them the words which thou gavest unto me: —* and he likewise says, of the doctrine he delivered, *the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and life,* chap. vi. 63.

If then, Christ did himself receive his doctrine from the father, and denies any ability he had of delivering such doctrine, but from the father; it is quite reasonable to conclude that his genuine apostles

apostles would disclaim all, or any ability to teach a doctrine of their own heads, *i. e.* from the natural capacities of reason with which they were endowed: but must derive the doctrine from the very same spirit that their master did derive it from. This led St. Paul to say, *not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing, as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is of God*, 2 Cor. iii. 5. which does not respect the ability of man, considered as a moral agent, and in things within his province: but it respects the revelation itself, which had nothing to do with his natural abilities, but was the immediate province of God. But then, this revelation being once made and committed to writing, there would be no more occasion for such communications, when the apostles had finished their ministrations. The appeal is made to this divine illumination, as what furnished them with all the materials of their evangelical writings.

So when these writings are finished, they themselves appeal to, or address the intelligent principle in man, as being faithful representations of truth, or the things of God, which this principle is to judge of, and apply. What foundation this lays for a wild enthusiasm, I see not. Indeed, if men were to deliver *new* doctrines, as belonging to Christianity, the scheme having been left imperfect by the apostles; they would then lie under the same necessity of having that other intelligent principle, called *inspiration*, or the spirit of God. But as this is not the case, the intelligent principle which takes place in man, and is a part of the human constitution, is *all* the capacity needful to converse with, and understand the scheme of the Gospel. An *honest* attention will qualify any man to understand the Gospel. Mistaking this, has been the ground of enthusiasm.

Rom.

Rom. ix. beg. is said to be, like the intemperate piety of some Calvinists, who pretend they should be content to be damned for the glory of God. Vol. II. p. 306. Note.

See XXI.
St. Paul's
affectionate
concern for
the Jews,
called in-
temperate
piety.

If a writer is inclined to be captious, he may ridicule any affectionate, warm expression that he shall meet with. But then, it will not be allowed just, if there is no resemblance in the things he compares. I dare say, Mr. C. had read the following sense given to the text, *Moses, and St. Paul, in the circumstances they were then in, might charitably, and without any extravagancy, be willing to have borne the temporal curse, then coming upon the Jews, (which is all that their words mean) if thereby it could have been possible to have saved the whole nation. But such high expressions of affection, are always well understood, in all books, and in all languages, to have, not a literal, but a figurative meaning.* Dr. S. Clarke's Sermon. Vol. II. pag. 46, 47. If Mr. Chubb had read this easy sense of the passage, he had better have attempted to have shewn the improbability of its being the genuine sense; than to have thrown a reflection on St. Paul's expressions, in the sense of a preceding observation, viz. *Hence some have put the question to themselves, and others have been so weak as to put it in their writings: whether a christian ought to be content to perish finally for the glory of God?* Sermon. Vol. II. pag. 46, 47.

Another instance of St. Paul's teaching an hurtful doctrine, is said to be in Rom. xiii. 1. *his pressing obedience to civil governors, under the consideration of their being the ordinance of God, was pressing it from a fictitious motive.*—And Act. xii. 2, 3. *is urged in opposition, viz. Herod's killing James the apostle.* Posthum. Works, Vol. II. p. 318—322.

See.
XXII.
He is said
to teach
an hurtful
doctrine,
Rom. xiii.
1.

It appears very plain, that when St. Paul speaks

M

of

of the powers that be, as ordered or ordained of God, and forbids Christians resisting the ordinance of God; he must, and does intend, that so far as they are so, *they are not a terror to good works, but to the evil*. But whatsoever were the moral characters of the supreme magistrates, during the first ages of Christianity, and whilst it was spreading in the world, it would have been a piece of madness, and wholly out of character for Christians to have made *resistance*; every way imprudent, or impolitic. Non-resistance and passive obedience, where the rights of conscience were not concerned, these were to be the maxims of their conduct. And in all lawful things, they were to shew their subjection to government, as *in rendering tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, and honour to whom honour*.

So that the injunctions objected to, seem not rightly to be understood: for they cannot respect civil government, as any farther an ordinance of God than as it answers the *end* of government. And where it did not, the first Christians were not allowed to raise any sedition, or be concerned in any conspiracy; but to shew that their religion was a friend to all social obligations and duties; that it made men quiet and peaceable subjects. But will any hence infer, that when kingdoms and states become Christian, the subjects have no right to remonstrate against any arbitrary rule, or tyrannical proceedings?

Yet, who would advise the *Jews*, for instance, in *Great-Britain*, or in any other nation, called *Christian*, or *Mahometan*, to resist the civil power, though they should be put under great hardships, or be persecuted? A man of any foresight, might perceive, that the advice would be attended with very hurtful consequences to that people.

But

But the condition of the first Christians, must have been yet *more* hazardous, had they, because of any public acts of oppression, or even sanguinary edicts, resisted the civil power: and what common reader, is not able to take some just survey of the state of the first Christians, in these respects, so as with ease to understand St. Paul, as giving proper, just, friendly advice to them, respecting their subjection to government?

1 Cor. xv. 32. Mr. Chubb cavils at! St. Paul would not have sung the song of the drunkard, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die, *had he duly attended to the subject*. Vol. I. p. 405.

Scit.
XXIII.
St. Paul
said to
sing the
song of
the
drunkard.

The meanness of this unlawful, crooked thrust, will appear to the first eye that looks with any care on the text. It was a natural conclusion, and very just; for, if the dead shall not arise, all the wonderful deliverances he had had, when constrained to combat beasts at *Ephesus*, was of no advantage to him: and instead of being exposed daily to deaths and dangers, in order to spread and confirm the doctrine of a future state, it would have been more in character for him to have indulged all the appetites, *if to-morrow we cease to be*. No, says Mr. Chubb, a temperate enjoyment of this world's good things, is the likeliest and the surest way to a long and happy life. Grant Mr. Chubb this; yet, if to-morrow we cease to be, it would be as justifiable to take the largest draughts of present pleasure, we can safely take for to-day: or however, with *Epicurus*, to study how to come at the utmost quantity of present sensitive gratifications. And the maxim that St. Paul has borrowed from the worldling, or sensualist, will not fairly bear any other interpretation, than the sense of the *Epicureans*; q. d. it would be wiser for us to quit our profession, and take all those measures that are

most likely to give us the greatest fill of the pleasures of this life, if death will put an end to our existence. So with St. Paul, such method was far more eligible than his own measures, which exposed him to so much evil, *if the dead rise not.*—But he adds immediately, what would satisfy any candid reader, that he had no such inattention to his subject, as is suggested; but kept close to it; for he says, *Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners; awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God.* It is pity but Mr. Chubb had kept his own eye on the context, and been himself a little more attentive to the rational and just manner, in which St. Paul handles this, and every other subject he investigates: less prejudices would have appeared in his treatment of this most venerable character and writer.

However, in justice to Mr. Chubb, I will again hold up to my readers, some of his finishing declarations;—*As the writings of the apostles were occasional, so they contain many excellent cautions, advices, and instructions, which serve for the rightly directing our affections and actions,*—Vol. II. p. 344. *I intend not to lead my readers into a neglect of the writings of the apostles; much less to lay them aside,* p. 345.—*By christianity I mean that revelation of God's will, which Christ was in a particular and special manner sent to acquaint the world with: and so far as the writings of the apostles are consonant with it, they come under the denomination of Christianity,* p. 346.—*If any say, that what I have written is out of disrespect to the person and ministry of Jesus Christ,*—*I answer, the accusation is false. And as upon the Christian scheme, Jesus Christ will be judge of quick and dead; so I assure my readers, that in this view, and under these considerations, I have*

no disagreeable apprehensions, on account of any thing that I have published to the world, pag. 353, 354.

We are now to observe what Mr. Chubb has said of the great fact on which the credibility of the Gospel has its support, viz. the resurrection of Christ.—And from the different appearances of the risen Jesus, that are recorded, he thus expresseth himself; *And does not this minister a temptation to men to think and say, that if the business of Christ's resurrection was not a fraud; yet it looks very much like it, and seems to have the same appearance as if it was so,* Vol. I. p. 358.

See.
XXIV.
Christ's
resurrection looks
much like
a fraud.

But can there be so much as the semblance of fraud, detected from the history, when all those appearances answered their end; and did convince those to whom they were made, that he was actually risen? Is there an intimation, once given, that any man thought himself imposed upon, or deceived by them? Did not the persons who saw him, risque their lives upon the truth and certainty of their having seen, known, and conversed with the risen Jesus? The very instructions they received from him, demonstrated the truth of his being the very person, whom the Jews had crucified. And his appearing to them in different forms, was so far from weakening, that it strengthened and confirmed the facts of his death and resurrection. So that if we suppose, with the objector, he sometimes did appear as a tall, and sometimes as a little man, sometimes with greater bulk of body than at other times; what had any, or all of this to do with deception? The difference of stature, or of bulk, could no more hinder him from being known to them, than the transfiguration on the mount, had made him less known to Peter, James, and John. On the other hand, they would consider our Lord's body, as

a resurrection body ; no longer subject to the laws of this temporary, material system. It was, and must be capable of compression and expansion, at his own pleasure : and this too, tho' it was the *same* body in which he had suffered. It is now indeed in no respect susceptible of pain or injury, as it had been before ; for the whole animal œconomy is altered. No more circulation of the blood ; the *diastole* and *systole* of the heart is useless, as the body is a vehicle immediately actuated by a self-moving, intelligent spirit. Hence it is, that we are told of his bidding Thomas *thrust his hand into his side* ; since it would not cause an uneasy sensation, nor was it any injury to him, that the *division*, made by the spear, yet remained. It was the same identical body *set free* from all the incumbrances of mortality ? *Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself : handle me, and see, for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as ye see me have*, Luke xxiv. 39.

The different appearances were much more in character, than an uniform, unaltered bodily form would have been. It proved him *to be risen indeed*. His identical sameness had other more substantial proofs than the numerical sameness of material particles could afford. Nay, these could not possibly be, from the effusion of blood on the cross, made from all his wounds : unless the old mass of blood, for which he has now no occasion, had been replaced. And I understand St. Paul as having this idea, when he says, that *flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God*, i. e. flesh and blood, or the body of man, as it is now constituted. It is now, a *spiritual*, and not a *natural* body, suited unto a state of beatification and glory !

Not satisfied with what was said above, he tells us, *that the resurrection of Christ does not appear plainly,*

8th.

XXV.

plainly, to him, designed and intended clearly to evince the possibility and certainty of a resurrection to eternal life; because it appears to be directed to answer another purpose; and because it does not seem wisely directed to answer this. Vol. I. p. 334 — a resurrection to eternal life.

339. What was that other purpose, which it was directed to answer? *It was to gather, or rather to keep together his dispirited disciples, to commission and qualify, and send them forth to preach the gospel.*

Was it so? What was the Gospel they taught? Why, that God had raised up Jesus from the dead, whom the Jews had wickedly put to death: and that he was risen the first fruits of them who sleep: that by this same Jesus, God will raise all the dead. This was the Gospel, which he authorized, commissioned, and qualified them to teach, and to commit to writing, after they had confirmed it, by the miracles which they wrought in the name of the risen Jesus. A doctrine that Christ himself had taught, when he said, that he was the resurrection and the life, and that he would give his flesh for the life of the world. A doctrine, which assures us, that if we have now our conversation in heaven, we may look for the favour from thence, to change our bodies of humiliation, and fashion them like to his glorious body. Agreeable to his own teachings, that he will come again, and take all his faithful disciples to himself, *that where he is, there they may be also.*

These are essential parts of the Gospel, which the apostles were commissioned and qualified to preach: which makes it evident, that his resurrection, and manifestation of it to his disciples, had this end principally in view, viz. to evince not only the possibility, but the certainty of a re-

urrection unto eternal life. It is very apparent that *Festus* the Roman governor, having collected all the materials in the Jews accusations of *Paul*, sums them up in this single point, viz. *certain questions they had against him of their own religion, even of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive*, Act. xxv. 19. This is the report he makes to King *Agrippa*: from which affirmation, *St. Paul* had inferred the certainty of a resurrection to *eternal life*, of all the virtuous and holy. And his having seen the exalted *Jesus*, and conversed with him, was a full assurance to him of the truth of the doctrine. He had likewise collected *Christ's* several appearances, from the testimony of the other apostles, 1 *Cor.* xv. from whence he argues not only the certainty of the resurrection-body, but also its very nature and abilities. The establishing of this doctrine was the plain design and intention of *Christ's* appearing unto, and informing his disciples in the nature of their office, for which he qualified them. So that one would, out of charity to *Mr. Chubb*, be tempted to conclude, that his head was somewhat disordered when he wrote his *farewel*. However, one may fairly conclude, he had no freedom of thought; but that he wrote under very strong prejudices.

Sett. XXVI. him rejecting the accounts of *Enoch* and *Elijah's* not tasting death: which, he says, have not sufficient ground of credit, being only related by single historians, Vol. I. p. 311.

Enoch and
Elijah's
translation
rejected.

A single historian, whatever credit he may have had in the world, is no valid testimony with *Mr. Chubb*. And if there has happened to be three or four concerned in writing the history of a person, who was put to death by the *Jew-nation*, at the time of their having a *Roman* governor; and much against his judgment that he passed

passed sentence: tho' these historians all agree in that crucified person's being raised from the dead, and miracles are wrought for fifty or sixty years after, in all parts of the world, in evidence of the truth of this single fact; yet, it looks much like a fraud, and the evidence was not wisely conducted! We must not therefore be surprized that he can reject the testimony of *single* historians about the translation of *Enoch* and *Elijah*. For more than this, being once persuaded that there never could be any such thing as a miracle; and that this state may possibly be the *only* state of man; it was quite natural for him to reject all reasoning and evidence about God's raising up *Christ* from the dead. These intervening ideas hindered his mind from seeing the force of evidence.

With Christians, these two events are credible: the one in the antediluvian age, the other toward the middle of the *Jewish* state. Of the former, let me use the words of a most amiable man: *As the death of the first parent must occasion melancholy thoughts in his surviving children; the translation of Enoch was proper to support them, since thereby assurance was given to the pious of a future happy life: he walked with God, and was not, for God took him.—It could not but be looked upon as designed for an encouragement and motive to piety and virtue.* See Dr. Jer. Hunt's Essay for explaining the scripture revelations.

The other instance, viz. that of *Elijah*, was at a time when the *Jew* nation was become very wicked and idolatrous. And it seems that *Elijah* had been a most remarkable prophet, and had wrought miracles in honour of the true God, against the false ones whom *Abab's* priests worshipped.

N

Again,

Again, What if *Elijah's* translation was recorded only by *one* historian? this historian says, that *there were fifty men of the sons of the prophets, who stood in sight over-against* — who saw the ascent of *Elijah*: and were convinced that the *same spirit* that had been with *Elijah*, *did now rest on Elisba*, 2 K. ii. 7, 15, compared. — What of this? Mr. Chubb will tell us, *that a multitude of spectators of a fact, amounts to nothing at all without their testimony*, Vol. II. p. 203. So that this *fifty* should have signed the account, delivered by the historian. But had they done it; there would have been witnesses yet wanting to have proved that these *fifty*, were *honest men, and true*, who had signed the narrative. So that it would be endless labour to make an history credible, with a determined *sceptic*. With reasonable men, it appears a strong evidence of the truth of a fact, that it is reported to have been done in the most public manner, before multitudes. And it is enough to determine the credibility of such facts, that we know they were such as implied no absurdity, or contradiction: but, on the contrary, very great and good ends were designed to be answered by them, every way worthy of God, and of the instruments employed by him. Now, the translation of *Elijah* would serve to the same purpose, with that of *Enoch's* giving assurance to the pious, of a future happy life. And therefore as it does not stand in need of farther testimony than the one historian, there seems to be no danger in giving him credit.

After all, it is a question with me, whether Mr. Chubb did not think the *apocryphal* writings as authentic as the old testament books. And if he did, he will be chargeable with inattention; because in the history of the *Maccabees*, B. i. c. ii. ver. 58, it is said, that *Elias*, *because he*
was

was zealous and fervent in the laws, was taken up even into heaven. Unless he thought that the same historian, who wrote the second book of the Kings, wrote also the first book of the *Maccabees*.

But if the book of the *Maccabees* should be allowed to have been a very ancient *Jewish* history, written by another hand, and greatly approved of by that people; then one may reasonably conclude, that the fact of *Elias*'s translation was generally believed amongst that people.

However, we Christians, have more than the testimony of a single historian; inasmuch as *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke* have assured us, that *Elias* was with *Moses*, at the transfiguration of our Lord.

Yet, with Mr. *Chubb*, our Lord's miracles should have been attested by the written testimony of the multitudes, who saw them. Is not this a way to cancel all obligation to the credit due to any history? It is to rob men of all the pleasure and profit, that letters, or writing affords, in giving the history of facts. And in the next age, Mr. *Chubb*'s farewel may, with greater reason, be called in question.

The great advantage of the Old Testament writings, as they bear testimony to the New, is that of *prophecy*. But this, Mr. *Chubb* endeavours to overthrow. He owns indeed, that God does foreknow whatever is foreknowable in nature, Vol. II. p. 140. And he farther says, Let it be admitted that the Deity does foreknow all events to come; as well those which result from human agency, as those which result from the constitution of the natural world, and from a particular and special application of God's power and providence in any time to come. That God can thereby foretell whatever he does foreknow, seems to be plain and

See. XXVII.
Prophecy
not an
evidence
of the
truth of a
future re-
velation.

clear; and that God may foretell future events, when some great and good end can be answered thereby, I can see no reason from whence to conclude the contrary. But then, that God does foretel future events, by way of evidence, thereby to prove or make good the truth and divinity of revelations, or propositions revealed; these points are not to be admitted without inspection, because they are not self-evident propositions, and therefore are to be enquired into, Vol. II. p. 141. And further, To foretel any uncertain event, which is the case of all prophecy, in our present view of it, in order to prove, or render certain any uncertain proposition, which is the case of all revelation, or revealed propositions that stand in need of proof, such a conduct seems to be preposterous and unnatural, as the means is not adapted to answer the end to which it is directed; seeing the revealed proposition is not, nor cannot, in the least, be proved by it, but it remains equally as uncertain, after the foretelling such events, as before; and this seems to me to be the case of all prophecy, when offered in evidence, as aforesaid, ib. 143, 144.

From the above citations, it is allowed, that God may foretel future events, when some great and good end may be answered thereby: but then, it is denied that they can be evidence in proof of the divinity of revelations, or propositions revealed. But why so? If those propositions revealed are fitted to be of important service to mankind; then God may foretel events in evidence of their truth and divinity: otherwise he may not foretel future events, when some great and good end may be answered thereby. And such prophecy will be a proof, that is neither preposterous nor unnatural; because it will be a means well adapted to answer the end to which it is directed.

For

For example; Mr. Chubb owns it probable that there was such a person as Jesus Christ, and that as it appears probable that Jesus Christ was entrusted with a superiority of power to be administered for the public good: so from hence it becomes probable, that he was likewise entrusted with the administration of superior knowledge, to answer the same end, seeing he assumed such a character; I say, the former is a probable ground of the latter. From these premises, and this general view of the case, I think this conclusive follows, viz. it is probable Christ's mission was divine, Vol. II. p. 42, 43. Hence I reason thus, viz. that since Mr. Chubb owns the probability of Christ's divine mission and character, this cannot be ranged under the head of an *uncertain* proposition. And if so, then uncertainty cannot be the case of all revelation. But inasmuch as God may foretel future events, when some great and good end may be answered thereby: and these propositions, viz. that Christ's mission was divine; and his superior power and knowledge appear probably to have been administered for the public good; it will follow, that the foretelling events in proof of Christ's mission, was so far from being preposterous and unnatural, that they were every way fitted, as means can be to an end which they are designed to answer. So that it was altogether worthy of God to foretel that he would send one, or raise one up of the seed of Abraham, *in whom all nations should be blessed*. And to declare by Isaiah, *that unto us a child is, or shall be born; to us a son is, or shall be given, and the government shall be on his shoulders: and his name shall be called wonderful, counsellor, the mighty God, the father of the ages to come, the prince of peace*. And by Daniel to mention the precise time, *after threescore and two weeks (of years) shall Messiah be*

be cut off, but not for himself. And the place of his birth by *Micah*; *But thou Beth-lehem-Ephrata, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, to be the ruler in Israel.*—These, and some other prophecies, having an exact fulfilment in the person of *Christ*, who is acknowledged to have had a divine mission, are no small evidence in proof of that revealed proposition.

We might add our Lord's own predictions, of which he was capable from that superior knowledge with which he was entrusted for the benefit of mankind; these are yet corroborating proofs of his character and mission. Such as that the Gospel of peace would be made the engine of war, and great confusions,—that the *Jews* temple and polity should be destroyed, or the desolation of their country; *Matth.* xxii. 38. *Luke* xiii. 35. And the declaring that the *Roman* eagles would be the instruments of their ruin, forty years before it happened; together with the subsequent continued dispersion of the *Jews*; which are no contemptible evidences of the truth of Christianity.

Another external evidence of the truth of Christianity was, *miracles*. Mr. Chubb, we have already seen, has acknowledged, in more places than one, the probability of *Christ's* having superior power intrusted with him to be administered for the public good: yet he took it into his head to endeavour to shew, that miracles could not be wrought in evidence of *Christ's* divine mission; so far as he has affirmed, *that he thinks, divine revelation does not afford a proper ground of certainty, with respect to men's future existence.* Vol. I. p. 327. This he has affirmed, after much labour to shew, that the mind of man may be material and perishable. However, whether the rational mind in a man results from a material system,

See.
XXVIII.
Miracles
not an evidence of
the truth
of Christianity,

stem, or from an immaterial substance; this, be in the article of
thinks, is most obvious, viz. it rises and falls (if men's fu-
be may so speak) with the material composition it ture exist-
acts in and by; else whence comes the proverb, ence.
Once a man, and twice a child. Vol. I. p. 324.

If it be most obvious, that the rational mind rises and falls with the material composition, whether it ariseth from a material or immaterial substance; and if divine revelation does not afford a proper ground of certainty, with respect to men's future existence; if it shall be found, that the great doctrines of Christianity have their weight and importance even as they respect a future state; it will follow, that miracles could not be wrought in attestation of those doctrines: because of the revelation not affording any proper ground of certainty of the truth of its principal doctrines.

It seems pretty plain, that Mr. Chubb was doubtful as to a future state: yet his doubting is no reason why another should be in suspense, who gives credit to the Christian doctrine. For if that be true, we see in the behaviour of Jesus on the cross, as well as from the current design of his doctrine, that the rational mind does not rise and fall with the material composition. There were no signs of languor, diminution, or decay in his rational mind; notwithstanding his excruciating torture, and the great effusion of his blood. He bids Mary, standing by his cross, to look upon John, as her son: and orders John to look upon Mary, as his mother. He lets Mary know, that she must no longer look upon himself, as her son; but nevertheless, he had provided a tender guardian of her. And when the chief-priests and scribes and elders revile him, as abandoned of God, he cries out, my God, my God, why—this impious raillery, —*hast thou forsaken me?* he knew

knew he had not; but can now, look upon him as his God, and Father. He knew, that God would for ever remain his God; and therefore he said, *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.* Does this look as if the rational mind must rise and fall with the material composition? Or rather, is it not a demonstration of a future existence, not only of *Christ's* person, but of all good Christians, whose lives are *bid* with him in God? Indeed, the *Pyrrhonists*, who deny that man is capable of judging with certainty on any evidence, cannot be supposed at all inclined to receive the doctrine of a future state: but the great infelicity of this condition of their minds, can never be the object of envy to the Christian; but rather of commiseration and pity. The reveries of the mad-man, or wild enthusiast, who dreams only of happiness, and is full of visionary enjoyment, seems more eligible than the doubtings and constant uncertainties of the *Pyrrhonist*.

Had Mr. Chubb said, that as the organs of sensation become disabled, and the bodily strength impaired, so the rational mind becomes less able to express its powers by and thro' this disabled vehicle: common observation would then have been in his favour. But that the rational mind must both *rise* and *fall* with the material composition, does not seem at all probable: if by *rational*, we intend, the mind formed by *truth*, by *reason*, or in other words, by the *will* of God. There is, there can be no connection between the falling of the body, and that of the rational mind: no more, than it appears, that from the amputation of a limb, or dismembering of the body, a maiming of the rational mind takes place.—A man may indeed by some habits of labour and application of his intellectual powers, bring on such an inability of the bodily machine, as shall be

dotage, or a *second childhood*. But this will prove nothing; because others are found, with far less promising bodily constitutions, to have reached a more advanced season of life, and without any such impair of the vigor of the mental faculties. In short, there are not yet known, that I have ever heard of, any *data*, upon which we are warranted to conclude, that *the rational mind rises and falls with the material composition*.

The materials Mr. Chubb has laid together are enough, if true, and what may be depended upon as close and good reasoning from just principles, not only to exclude miracles in support of the Christian doctrine; but also to invalidate and nullify the whole scheme of Christianity: *i. e.* If it be yet a *moot* point, whether man shall exist, or shall not exist hereafter; or rather, if it be doubtful whether the great intention of the Christian doctrine has to do with man's existence in *fulurity*.

As to the *rational mind* in man, of which Mr. C. has affirmed, *that it is capable of religion, or of acting in obedience to God's law, and with reference to his glory; which, he says, are the same thing*. Vol. I. p. 285. *Also that motive is not the physical cause, but the ground and reason of action*. p. 166. *And again, that motives are to be estimated from the action relating to God, to ourselves, and to others*. p. 217. From these principles, it is most obvious, that man has a power of action which is or may be perfectly at liberty from physical impulse; because motive is not the *physical* cause, but the ground and reason of action: and because motives are to be examined and estimated by this rational mind, from the action they would induce unto, as relating to God, to ourselves, and to others. Action which relates to a designing mind, that exists eternally,

Vol. I. 162. which Mr. *Chubb* denies *matter* to have done, p. 163. God, and matter in Mr. *Chubb's* opinion are infinitely distinct: the one a necessary existence, the other not. If therefore the mind of man is capable of religion, that is, of acting by choice, in obedience to God's will, or in reference to his glory; this being the first end at which man levels his actions; and on which depends his right conduct towards God's creation; it will follow, that if the mind of man be only material and perishing, notwithstanding its thus forming and conducting its aims and actions; then, the principles and motives of action do not produce any effects upon the agent, that are *equal* or *agreeable* to their nature and force. For man having the *will* of an eternal, immutable spirit, as the chosen rule of its affections, even the eternal, invariable rule of right; yet, this rational and moral mind in man remains perishable!

Mr. *Chubb* seems not to have weighed well his own principles; nor enough to have attended to the capacities of the human mind. For although we cannot form any idea of the *substratum* of thought, yet, we discern that the human mind does increase in its power and abilities by use and exercise. It does so in speculative abilities, as well as in the habits of its action. But then, with me, it appears evident, that we must distinguish between the habitudes of action. As thus; if the mind of man employs itself habitually upon principles that are only relative to the necessities, conveniences, and accommodations of this present, temporary life, in which he takes a *first* care to secure these, as his great scope and end; he cannot be said to have attained those habitudes of action that are immortal: because of his utmost scope and aim being

being limited and confined to temporal and perishing good. But if the mind of man, employs itself habitually upon principles that are relative to religion, that is, to the doing of the will of God, and obtaining *his* approbation, who is an immutable, eternal Spirit, and in whom man centers all his reverence, trust, hope, and joy; then, the human mind so habituated to religious action, imbibes principles that are immortal; because the scope and aim of his whole deportment has the favour of God, as its end. And God being in himself immutable and eternal; his favour, or an interest in his perfections, thus obtained, must be immutable and eternal. So that as the human mind, may, or may not habituate itself to such principles of action; it may, or may not have the possession of life eternal.

And as to the Christian revelation, I understand it, in the great design of its doctrine, to inculcate the certainty of life eternal; it being in the above manner attainable. Nor only so, but I take the resurrection of *Jesus Christ* to be in direct evidence of that certainty.—The objections made to the publickness of the testimony, are, with me very trifling. For, had not the *Jew-Sanbedrim* and people, together with *Pilate* the *Roman* governor, who put our Lord to death, full evidence that he was dead, by the soldiers piercing his Side with a spear? And did they not seal his sepulchre, and set a watch over it? In these circumstances he arose, and within the time he himself had foretold. Also his appearances to his disciples were such as gave them entire satisfaction, that he was risen. Nor could the *Jew* nation complain of any want of evidence, in that his apostles did afterward work miracles in his name: in *his*, the name of the very same person whom they told the *Jew* nation, that

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they

they had, by wicked hands crucified and slain; but God had exalted him to be both Lord and Christ! — This fact should be refuted, before any objection can be fairly made to his not rising publicly.

See.

XXIX. Another attempt to invalidate miracles from Christianity, being a Supplement to Judaism.

Mr. Chubb seems inclined to attempt an overthrow of it. The manner of his operation is this; he labours to shew, *That the principal controversy with the apostles, was, whether Christianity was a supplement to Judaism, or Judaism was to be abolished by the introduction of Christianity. And if miracles were not proper evidences of the truth and divinity of the doctrines above-mentioned; then, how come they to be so in any other case?* Vol. II. p. 243, 244.

This Objection will vanish, when we consider, that the history never once intimates that any one of the apostles either did, or could work a miracle to determine any one controversial difference, or matter of speculative debate. The special power could only operate in evidence of Christ's being the promised Messiah, and that the doctrine he had taught, was of God. It supported the doctrine of remission of sins, without sacrifice; which had not been the doctrine of the Jew ritual. Nor do any one of the apostles ever in the least disagree, as to the design of the miraculous power being exerted. In the great controversy which had arisen among some Jew zealots, who would have annexed circumcision to Christianity, *Acts xv.* the apostles wrought no miracle to decide the controversy: for so far from disagreeing in their opinion, they all unite in their verdict; yea, in a full assembly they pitch upon Paul and Barnabas, who they call their beloved, to go to the Gentiles. Neither is it matter of surprize, that debates should arise among the first Jew-converts, who were prejudiced strongly in favour of circumcision.

tion. Or, that the Apostles to the *Jews*, and those to the *Gentiles*, should take different measures with them, as the different state of their people's prejudices would require. But in this, miracles are never said to be wrought in support of the one, or of the other measures of conduct.

Miracles are objected to, *because they were no protection to the apostles:—though this seems to me most belief.* Vol. I. p. 208.

See.
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Miracles
no protec-
tion to the
apostles.

But what if miracles were never intended to be used by the apostles to screen them from persecution? what then will follow? why, that the objection has no foundation in truth or reason. And I am afraid a greater objection would have been raised against them, if our Lord had allowed his apostles such use of miraculous power. Indeed during his own personal ministrations, the miraculous power did secure both *Christ* himself and his disciples from all violence and stratagem, till the hour came in which he was to resign or lay aside for a season, that *morphe*, or form of God, which he had been invested withal, in order to take on him the form of a *slave*.—But the miraculous power could not be intended, after *Christ's* ascension, to protect the apostles, except in some special cases, from evil; for then the predictions of their master would have been false, who had told them, that they should undergo great persecutions.

Mr. Chubb objects to the truth of facts recorded of the apostles, and thinks, that they have marks of incredibility upon them; such as the effusion of the spirit at pentecost, Acts ii. beg. p. 212. And the miracles by handkerchiefs and aprons, Acts xix. 11, 12. favouring of fiction. p. 214. And to Matth. viii. 7, 8. p. 215. upon which he says, that the casting out devils, and curing diseases, in the use of handkerchiefs and aprons, look too much like juggling and cheat, &c.—He objects also to the shadow

See.
XXI.
Marks of
incredibi-
lity in mi-
racles
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selves.

shadow of Peter, Acts v. 15, 16. and says, that the people, according to this account, were healed of their respective diseases, whether they would or not. p. 216.—And he asks this question in the run of his argument; *if an honest, upright man in the church of Rome, may act otherwise than an honest upright man, (admitting such a way of speaking) then, why may not an honest upright man, upon the same grounds, act otherwise than an honest upright man, in any other church or case? and consequently, how will the miracles wrought by Jesus Christ and his apostles be proved to be otherwise than impositions? supposing them to have been much better attested than at present they appear to be, p. 230. And this he supposes applicable to St. Paul, in 1 Cor. ix. 20. 21.*

There would have appeared nothing more incredible in these accounts than in any other, had it been considered, that miraculous power could not be mistaken in its object: and moreover, that it was what could not be exerted, but in proof of *Christ's* being the true Messiah.—The effusion of the spirit at pentecost, was a measure suited to convince, as well as qualify. Mr. Chubb seems to own, *that their being taught the languages, seemed needful to their executing of their commission. But then, he thinks, the external appearances could serve only to strike terror, and excite wonder.*

Grant that this was the design, if it can be proved that it was no low design, but every way worthy of God; the objection to its credibility, on this account, will vanish. The history informs us, *that the apostles were together in one place when the day of pentecost was fully come, and that suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the house where they were sitting. And there appeared un-*

to them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.—Now when this voice was made, the multitude [among whom were devout Jews out of every nation under heaven,] came together, and were in the utmost surprize; because that every man heard them speak in his own language! i. e. the language of the country where they stately dwelt, and which they themselves spoke. Hence it is observable, that the external noise, or voice, Acts ii. 6. was designed to alarm, and bring together the multitude.—Mr. Chubb objected to the resurrection of Christ, because he did not appear publickly: but he should have attended to this circumstance, and he would then have greatly approved it. Besides, the phenomenon of the heavenly voice, was very suitable to alarm, and terrify the city, who had very lately put to death their master! and would at the same time check the rage and fury of the public against them. It was an open testimony given them from heaven; and occasioned such sort of Jews assembling about the apostles, as would spread the fame of them among all nations.

With respect to the fiery appearance within, hovering over the heads of each apostle, this had its use; since John the Baptist had borne his testimony to Jesus, that he should baptize with the Holy Spirit, and with fire. But before this, he had not done any thing to them, which so exactly answered that prediction of him. Jesus had only breathed on them before; i. e. when he appeared to them, as related, Joh. xx. 22, 23. viz. the time that he restored to them the power of working miracles; which had been withdrawn from them during their Lord's humiliation. At Pentecost they have the gift of tongues, and with the solemnity of external pointed or forked flame, hovering over the heads of each of them: an appearance,

pearance, very well suited to convince each, and every of them, that they were owned, and sanctified, or separated from heaven for the ministrations which *Jesus* had appointed them. It would have an apt tendency to confirm and establish their faith in *Jesus*, as ascended to the right hand of power: and be a proper means of uniting them in their esteem and affection for one another; forasmuch as they saw, that the signal was the same upon one, as it was upon another. So that the credibility of this narrative is yet unshaken.

The other instance mentioned about the *handkerchiefs*, and *aprons*, might afford matter of burlesque and ridicule, to a man of the most despicable, depraved wit: but to the rational, grave and modest, there will be found nothing that will bear ridicule. It was not possible that any misapplication could be made of the miraculous power: but if the people did but touch *Paul* with an handkerchief or apron, (either their own, or that belonged to a sick Person) at whatever distance; it did suffice for the healing of those diseased! and they who conveyed the handkerchiefs and aprons, would bear testimony to the amazing, the beneficent power which resided with that apostle!

Miracles might have been objected to, had they given the objects of their operation any additional powers, or had it conveyed abilities to men, above what are found in a perfect state of the intellectual and bodily; but they only removed defects and impediments, they were constant appeals made to the general laws, and demonstrated the operation of the universal law-giver. They introduced no *new* appearances, unknown in nature. Moreover, their honesty is not to be called in question.

See.
XXXII.
The supernatural

Miracles of no kind have an easy admittance with Mr. *Chubb*; for we find him objecting to the preter or supernatural formation of *Jesus Christ*,
by

by the overshadowing of the Virgin. And he ^{formation} thinks there is just ground of concluding, that he ^{of Jesus} was generated or begotten in the same way, viz. by ^{objected} the co-operation of a male and a female of the same species as the rest of mankind are.—And he says, that Matthew is guided by dreams, and Luke by visions.—But how John came to call Jesus, God's only begotten, he knows not. Vol. II. p. 271—276.

But why should the term *begetting*, or *begotten*, be objected to? when Mr. Chubb has himself said, as I hinted before, that it must be figurative, as Christians are said to be begotten thro' the Gospel. P. 278. So that when applied to the formation of Jesus Christ, I see not, why it should offend. For, as men, BEGOTTEN thro' the Gospel, intends no other than the energy of truth, forming the temper and complexion of their spirits to virtue and holiness; so the exertion of creative power in that singular production of the man Christ Jesus, may with equal propriety constitute him the only begotten Son of God. Adam was the Son of God, as made by the immediate energy of his power. All the sons of Adam are said to be God's offspring: but whoever annexed any such base, gross, sensual ideas to God's agency?—The *over-shadowing* seems to be analogous to the adumbration, or moving of the Spirit, or air of God upon the Waters, mentioned Gen. i. 2. The fecundity of nature admits no impure notion of the Creator. And men might as well say, that because God is spoken of under the personal pronouns of *he*, and *him*, that therefore Deity is of the masculine gender! But would not this render a man very contemptible? So with respect to the productions of omnipotence, tho' imaged under terms that are figurative; yet no man, who has formed any just conceptions of

Deity, will admit of sensual representation. *Tho' to the impure, all things will be impure.*

The fact does appear to me to be well supported; and worthy of credit. He was prophesied of, *Is. vii. 14. Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.* If any would see the distinction made evident in this context, between *Isaiab's* son *Shearjashub*, to which he pointed, ver. 15, 16, and the son of the virgin; he may consult *Bishop Chandler's* Defence of Christianity, from p. 316--332.

Matthew relates the fact with every proper circumstance that may remove doubt or scruple, and make the narrative credible. And so does *Luke*. *Matthew* refers to the above prophecy, as fulfilled in and by this event. *Joseph was espoused to Mary, but before they came together, Mary was found with child.*—The *εὐρεθὲν ἐν γαστρὶ*, *being found with child*, will by no means infer, that she underwent no examination. It is more probable, that *Heli*, her father, if living, who some think, had adopted *Joseph* from his infancy, and consequently, must have had great respect for him, it is more probable that he would himself be well satisfied, and not suffer any such imposition from his daughter. But however this was, we are assured, that it was a matter of great weight among the *Jews*, as she was betrothed; adultery being a capital crime. *Joseph* is at first much dissatisfied; but afterwards he is wholly reconciled to own her publicly: he is full of care about her; and looks upon the fruit with which she went, as given to him by miracle. He, at the time of the taxation, or enrolment, takes *Mary* along with him to *Bethlehem*, *Luke* tells us, *his espoused wife, being great with child*, *Luk. ii. 5.* Such is the distinction yet, *his espoused wife*. And *Mary* being delivered at *Bethlehem*,

the very city of *David*, and the place prophesied of, *Mic. v. 2.* He enrolls the child under his *own* name; and considers it as demanding from him a pious, paternal regard.

To the account given by the two Evangelists, we should add the testimony of *St. Paul*, who declares, *Rom. i. 2, 3, 4. that Christ was promised afore of God, by his prophets in the holy scriptures—who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh: and determined the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by his resurrection from the dead.* Made of the seed of *David*, is the same word rendered, *begotten*: the precise idea of the term, when applied to God's formation of him. And of the seed of *David* he was *made*, tho' only the supposed son of *Joseph*; because he was born of *Mary*, who was of the house and lineage of *David*, as well as her espoused husband, who was of the same family. And notwithstanding what men may say of the human *animalcula*, or *stamina* residing in the male; yet, as none can tell how that is conveyed into, or lodged in, the male vessels; so it is as easy to suppose Almighty power transposing such *stamina* from the body of *Joseph*, into the womb of *Mary*, without the common conveyance, or without any bodily union, or intercourse between them. There is no absurdity in this supposition: and it would accomplish prophecy, support the credit of the two Evangelists, and be a proper distinguishing criterion of the Messiah in his family, and to all those concerned in the reputation and character of his mother. The *apparatus* which related to the conception of *Elizabeth*, and the birth of *John*, who was to be *Christ's* harbinger, render the written accounts highly probable; and must have confirmed *Joseph*, in his esteem of *Mary*.

Besides, The Evangelists could be under no temptation to insert this, as a fact, if they had not had the materials given them from undoubted testimony: for it cannot be supposed, that they were unconcerned about the credibility of their histories. And it must also be allowed, that they were as capable of seeing difficulties, and making objection to inconsistencies, as any men: for they appear to be perfect masters of the subjects they wrote upon; and to know that they reported nothing but the truth of things.

They knew how to form a judgment of *dreams* and *visions*, when they saw such and such facts arising from them. Nor do they discover any thing like the wild reveries of Enthusiasts. They were assured from the histories of all past ages, of the *truth* of the doctrine of Angels ministering unto men: and their Master and Lord had confirmed it, by his own declarations. *I say unto you, that in heaven, their Angels do always behold the face of my father, which is in heaven.* So Angels came and ministered to him, after his temptation. So in his agony in the garden. And when he reproved *Peter* for smiting with the sword, in his master's defence, he says, *thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of Angels?* Actually made head over angels, and principalities and powers, our Lord has them employed under him, as *ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto the heirs of salvation.* They are the instrument of God's providential government, executing his pleasure. The guardians and protectors of men. *Jesus* will send them at the end of the world, to gather all scandals out of his Kingdom; they will sever the wicked from among the just. And the wise

and virtuous will be associates of these heavenly beings.

This is the doctrine of the New Testament, and no objection has been made to it, but by men, who, at the same time they are very sanguine in the denial of it, do confess an entire ignorance of the matter; and the best argument they give of it's not being a truth, is, they do not at all believe it. A mere *arbitrary negation* has the main strength of the infidel artillery, played off against revelation. So that the *faith* of a believer, had he no evidence, would be an argument of equal force, in defence of almost any opinion. But when the doctrine is delivered by *Jesus*, and proved by a variety of facts, in his own aid and succour; and when great numbers were eye-witnesses to their ministrations at the ascension of their Lord; it is not the raillery of ten thousand unbelievers, that can in the least affect the truth of it. For altho' they *laugh* at the ministration of angels, because invisible: I am persuaded, that the benevolent among them, such as Mr. *Chubb* was, would be highly pleased with such an employment; and gladly contribute to the safety, and direction of men's steps, all in their power, consistent with the liberty of free agents. So far is the doctrine of angelic ministrations from being ridiculous, that one cannot but conceive of it, as an appointment worthy the supreme: as it must be a most delightful employment to rational, benevolent creatures. It conveys a transporting idea of God's creation, to suppose the scale of intelligences in a state of subserviency; and related, by the everlasting bands of moral resemblance, and union.

The invisibility of them, ever since Christ's ascension, is perfectly consistent with the honours of *his* rule, who is the *one* Lord! angels and
men

men of virtue, are but fellow-servants ministring in his Kingdom. What has been the great temptation to any persons burlesquing the ministration of angels, has been the tendency such burlesque would have to discredit revelation; and as it was also very needful to countenance the denial of a particular providence.

A vain man, may divert himself with the angel coming to *Joseph*, and in a dream explaining to him, the pregnancy of *Mary*, as the effect of divine power. This, he may treat with ridicule; and call that annunciation of the angel to the virgin, *his going a courting*! I say, a man full of himself, as if he was an oracle of wisdom, might say this. But this would not have become Mr. *Chubb* tho' he has gone too far in his ridicule. For he says, "whether *Mary* informed this historian of what passed between her and the angel, or whether it had been with her as the angel had promised, and whether or how he came by his information; he knows not." Vol. II. p. 272.

This is quite impertinent and unworthy a man of gravity. For, he should have shewn the improbability of the historian having any such information from *Mary*, as to what passed between her and the angel; and the improbability of his having the information from *Joseph*, as to what passed between him and the angel; tho' the historian was well acquainted with both of them. But as he could not do this, the doubtings he would raise, are merely chimerical. And the historian is fully acquitted of any defect, in not saying, *how* he came by his information; since he has given us sufficient ground of belief, that he was every way capable of coming at the truth and certainty of what he has related.

Mr.

Mr. *Chubb* himself has said enough to support the credit of this extraordinary event, when he says, upon that passage, “*John* viii. 56. of “*Abraham having seen Christ’s day: Abraham* “could only have believed in the promise (sup- “posing such promise had been made) concern- “ing it; so, by a like figure of speech, and “with equal justness and propriety, *Christ* may “also have said of himself, that he was before “*Abraham*, when he only was in the purpose “and intention of God, and was the subject of “that promise, which *Abraham* believed in.” Vol. II. p. 255.

It is true, here is a reserve, a saving clause put in a parenthesis, *viz. supposing such a promise had been made*. Upon which supposition, the extraordinary event will appear to have been well adapted to distinguish *the Son of man*, from all others produced by ordinary generation. And not any thing appears in the conduct, capacity, or character either of *Joseph* or *Mary*, that is in the least forbidding, as to the credibility of it.

All the difference between Mr. *Chubb’s* reasoning and ours, respecting the promise to *Abraham*, is, he only *supposes* such a promise had been made. We *believe* that it had been made; and for this credit we have the testimony of the *Mosaic* history: the whole *Jewish* nation believed this history; and they did expect the promised messiah, at the very time he did appear: nay, the remaining fugitive *Jews*, to this day, do believe that such a promise was made to *Abraham*. I might add,

What can be said of those testimonies to the truth of this fact, given undesignedly in the most ancient Rabbinical writings; which say, *the birth of the Messiah alone, shall be without any defect—his birth shall not be like to that of other creatures*

creatures into the world—none shall know his father, before he tells it.—the redeemer that shall come, shall be without a father.—See bishop Chandler's defence of Christianity, page 337. They were led to say these things, from the language of ancient prophecy, and, very probably, from a current tradition.

Section
XXXIII.
The tempta-
tion in
the wil-
derness
burlesqu'd.

Mr. Chubb says, upon the account given, *Matthew* iv. of our Lord's temptation in the wilderness, "that this is such a demand upon the human understanding, that a man must unman himself to submit to it;—and that it does not appear to have answered any good purpose either to *Christ*, or the world. Vol. II. pag. 77, compare 194 and onward.

Let us impartially examine the history. He is said to be led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil. I can rationally suppose, that the presence of the Spirit, which descended upon him at his baptism, did now, by suggestion, direct him to this retirement, in order, to answer some most valuable ends: such as to convince him of the divine energy and influence of that presence, in his own support for forty days without food, or hunger. And this leading was very consistent with the moral character, and government of God. The Spirit did not lead him into the wilderness, to become the tempter himself; but to place him in an attitude of trial, or temptation from the devil. The virtue of all men, ariseth from their resistance of temptation: and such is our make, and situation, that there is no avoiding the address of objects, to our appetites or passions. The wisdom and goodness of God do appear, in not suffering us to be tempted above the given capacity of resistance. In the case of our Lord, I can conceive of this his retirement, during the
forty

forty days, as employed in receiving such instructions concerning his mission, office and kingdom, that were necessary to furnish him for his public ministry. And in this, he had a fulfilment of that prophecy, delivered by *Moses*; viz. *a prophet I will raise up like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them, all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.* See *Deut.* xviii. 18, 19. compare *Acts* iii. 22, 23. vii. 37. So *Peter*, and *Stephen* understood the prophecy. *Peter* has shewn, that it did not intend, a succession of prophets, as some will have it, for he adds, *Acts* iii. 24. *Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and those who follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise, as well as Moses, foretold of these days.*

There was an evident similitude, in the forty days fasting, and instruction of *Moses*, and of *Christ*.—Again, it was but reasonable, that after this extraordinary presence of the spirit with *Jesus*, and the great ability with which he was endowed, that he should have a proper trial of it. This, the history says, was made by the devil. The manner, in which the scenery of his temptations is conducted, appears to be very natural. For first, the appetite of hunger seizeth him, the extraordinary support being withdrawn. The tempter is supposed to know, that he had a power given him of working miracles; takes advantage of this circumstance, advising him to exercise his divine capacity, by turning stones into bread. No, says *Christ*, tho' I am hungry, I will do nothing to satisfy the craving appetite under thy direction; but only under the direction of God. How illustrious is the ex-

Q

ample!

ample ! how very instructive ! The *second* temptation, is that of setting *Jesus* upon a pinnacle of the temple, or on the battlements, and then desiring that he would cast himself down ; and thereby shew his confidence in the care of angels : very probably, now visible both to *Jesus* and the tempter. No ; says *Jesus*, I have not any such permission ; but am forbidden to tempt the Lord my God.—How very instructive this conduct ? as it condemns all presumption upon the divine care, or needlessly hazarding our lives, in order to express a trust and reliance on God ! The *third* temptation, has its scenery on an exceeding high mountain, where the devil represents, in several artificial visionary appearances, to the utmost advantage, *all the Kingdoms of the world*, as large in the scenery as the eye could take in and examine, with the *glory*, the *grandeur*, and the *extensiveness* of them ;—probably this was done in succession. These, he says, he will give to *Jesus*, if he will but fall down, and worship him : signifying to him, that the greatest earthly monarchs were his subjects, and paid him a constant homage ! *Jesus* repels this temptation, by assuring him, that he knew infinitely better. It is the duty of all men *to worship the Lord their God, and to serve him only*. The dignity and glory of human nature, is no otherwise attainable. Is there not great instruction contained in this ? *Christ* came to destroy *the works of the devil* : And this interview gave the earnest of it.

To me, there appears no *unmanning of one's self*, in assenting to the truth of this narrative. For *Matthew* is not the only historian who mentions the fact ; but *Mark* has, *ch. i. 12, 13*. And also *Luke*, *ch. iv. 1—14*. It would indeed have been incredible, if the history had affirmed, that the

the spirit of God *tempted Jesus*. Or if it had intimated, that the devil had been permitted to do *any violence* to the freedom of our Lord's will; that he took him against, or with his consent; or that any injury was done either to our Lord's mind, or his body. On the contrary, tho' he is permitted to move him from place to place; yet *Jesus* suffers no bodily harm. And altho' he *tempts* him, by an address to the appetites and passions, the common scenery of human temptations; yet these are repelled by a reverence of God, and a supreme regard to his authority. *Jesus* was before prepared for the combat, by forty days miraculous support, without food or hunger, and by proper instructions. And as he was to assert a *Sovereignty* over evil spirits, and to destroy the works of the devil; yea, abolish all that influence and power, which evil spirits had been permitted to have over the bodies of men; manifest in those possessions, or in their inflicting strange disorders, which our Lord's history maketh mention of, the narrative does hence appear to be credible. And it is so far from being an objection to Christianity, that no such instances of *demoniacks* have since been known, in any age after the apostolic; that it is a confirmation of the truth of Christianity.

If any should ask, how the Evangelists came to know the particulars of this temptation? I would answer, that the same spirit which led *Jesus* into the wilderness, was able to inform them. And that probably *Jesus* himself had informed them of it, within the forty days he abode with them after his resurrection.

It is manifest, that good purposes are intended to be answered by this temptation; and altho' it is a very easy matter to burlesque the whole of

the scenery, and call the devil a *fool*; yea, to affirm, that the author of this story knew nothing of the *Antipodes*: yet, it is not so easy to make the burlesque fasten on the subject. *Jesus* was but newly inaugurated into his office, as the *Messiah*, *God's anointed*. He was to be instructed in the whole of his ministration; and to have the most finished testimony of *God's* being with him. But it does not follow, that the *devil* must be informed in the true nature of his office, and the design of his mission. Neither is there one article in the temptations, inconsistent with the character of the tempter. The temptations are adapted to the suspicions which the evil spirit had of *Jesus* being the promised seed of the woman, that should *bruise his head*; and put an end to that sway and dominion which had been exercised over the *bodies* of men. And the very manner in which temptation does make its address to the human mind, is in this scenery exposed, and overcome! accordingly, in all the dispossessions, the sovereign power of *Jesus* was manifested: and he acknowledged, even by *demons*, to be the son of God. They solicit, *he would not send them into the ABYSS*, Luke viii. 31. or *torment them before the time*, Matthew viii. 29. or *not send them out of the country*, Mark. v. 10.

Many good ends are designed to be answered by this narrative to *others*. The apostles would learn that miraculous power was not to be exercised by them for *shew* or *ostentation*; or for extricating themselves from perils.—It forbids all complaint, on account of the present life of man being a state of temptation.—It shews us that God does not suffer any invisible beings to violate the liberty and freedom of man.—It points out to us the utmost strength of temptation, which

which lies in sensible, perishing things.—It shews us the certain method of overcoming temptation, viz. a supreme reverence of God's word or will. *It is written.* If these are not good ends, let the objector shew us what are besides,

This narrative supposeth, yea, teacheth the ministration of good angels, as well as the influence which wicked spirits have had in this world of ours. And there must have been facts subsisting, during our Lord's ministrations, and those of his apostles, upon which the narratives are grounded; or else they could never have been so universally received. For, the New Testament writings have no one worldly motive, or maxim of worldly policy to give them any recommendation. To compare this narrative with *Romish legends* is therefore very dishonourable; reflects greatly both on the judgment, and ingenuity of our author.

The miracle related in *Mark* v. 1—19. has the following reflexions made upon it: “ Now
“ for *Christ* to be accessory to so great an evil as
“ this, viz. the destruction of so many innocent
“ creatures, to the great hurt and damage of
“ their owners, and to the injury of the public;
“ creatures who were called into being, as well
“ to answer a purpose to themselves, as to be
“ subservient to the common good; creatures
“ who had not done any thing to draw forth
“ *Christ*'s displeasure against them; when the
“ doing this tended to alienate the minds of the
“ people against *Christ*'s person and ministry, as
“ we find it did, supposing it to be fact, for they
“ desired him to depart out of their coast; and
“ to do this at the request, and to gratify the
“ wicked desires of a great number of devils or
“ evil spirits; this is so contrary to *Christ*'s ge-
“ neral

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Mar. v.
1—19.
objected
to.

“ neral behaviour, and to the salutary purposes
 “ he proposed to answer in this world, as renders
 “ the story perfectly incredible; and therefore I
 “ consider it to be either a false branch of his-
 “ tory, or else that it is falsely related to us.”
 Vol. II. p. 181.

What must be taken for granted, in support-
 ing the credibility of the narrative is, that dæ-
 mons, or evil spirits had an influence upon the
 bodies of men, in the time of our Lord's per-
 sonal ministry. This seems manifest from many
 passages in the New Testament writings, such
 as *Matth.* iv. 24. *Luke* vii. 21. x. 17. *Acts* xix.
 12, 13, 15, 16. And that it was not a Jew
 dream, should appear from *Peter's* declaring to
Cornelius a Roman officer, *Acts* x. 38. that God
 anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost,
 and with power, who went about doing good, and
 healing all that were oppressed of the devil.—All
 that were under the dynasty and influence of the
 devil. And *St. John* tells us, that Christ was
 manifested to destroy the works of the devil. *1 Eph.*
 iii. 8. I can see nothing unreasonable or absurd,
 in supposing that evil spirits had had such in-
 fluence, and that Christ and his apostles dispos-
 sessed them of that influence, both in *Judea* and
 elsewhere. Idolatry and vice had universally pre-
 vailed. And the permission of such influence
 may perhaps be accounted for, from its exhib-
 iting to the view of the world, the malignant
 disposition of the dæmons which men worship-
 ped, as well as the evil effects of vice upon the
 devotees of it. But this not reclaiming mankind,
 the power of Jesus exercised over dæmons was
 a convincing evidence of its divinity, by his re-
 moving such evils from countries and nations.
 If the unbeliever should say, that this is all imagi-
 nary, let him give us some principles which will
 conclude

conclude the absurdity of supposing, that there ever has been any such possessions, oracles, or divinations.

But more particularly, I would consider the objection under these four branches, as (1.) That evil or injury was done to the creatures themselves. (2.) That evil or injury was done to the proprietors of them. (3.) That the miracle did alienate the minds of the people against *Christ's* person and ministry. (4.) That the wicked desires of a number of devils, or evil spirits were gratified. As to the *first*; although swine are the creatures of God's power, and more generally made for the service of man; yet, it is evident that their use was absolutely forbidden among the *Jews*, in *Palestine*. See *Lev. xi. 7, 8. Deut. xiv. 8*. This law rendered the use of swine unlawful: for they are forbid *to touch a carcass*. And whilst living, every one knows, they are of no use to man any where. I doubt not but there was a reason in nature for a prohibition of the use of swine in *Judea*, either from their being unwholesome food; or from their ministering too much to the purposes of luxury among them. In the hot months, even in this Northern Island, swines-flesh is not reckoned wholesome: surely then, it could not be so in that much warmer climate. And *Lightfoot* has observed, that the *Romans* had swines-flesh in high esteem, as a luxurious food. So that there was occasion given for a prohibition in the censor's laws, *interdictaque cœnis abdomina, glandia, testiculi; vulvæ, fœcipita verrina*. See his works, Vol. I. p. 231. He thinks it probable, that the *Roman* luxury had tempted the *Jews* in *Gadara* to deal in swine.

That the *Jews* had gone into an abominable, idolatrous use of swines-flesh, will appear from
If.

If. lxxv. 4. There were those who remained among the graves, and lodged in the monuments of the dead, who eat swines flesh, and broth of abominable things.—comp. c. 66, 17. which will enable us to form some idea of the dæmoniac, and of the vitious, idolatrous character of the *Gadarenes*, when our Lord visited them. So in the history of the *Maccabees*, under *Antiochus*: *Eleazar*, a principal scribe, an aged man, was constrained to open his mouth to receive swines flesh, which spitting out, he was put to death. 2 *Mac. vi.* This will obviate the first article of the objection, by shewing, that the destruction of the swine at *Gadara*, was in vindication of the law and the prophets; and a beneficial removal of an hurtful food, as well as an open reproof of their idolatries.

So that the second article will be easily answered, *viz.* “that an injury was done to private property; nay, to the public.” The fallacy of this is apparent, as they were illicit, contraband goods; and forbidden by the statute laws of their country. Nor did *Tiberius*, the *Roman* Emperor, allow his lieutenants, or governors of this province, to oblige the *Jews* to violate any of their religious rites or customs. But *Pilate* having been guilty, they had matter of complaint against him. See *Dr. Lardner's Credibility*, Vol. I. p. 193.—Will any man say, that it would be a piece of injustice to seize any *contraband* goods? or to destroy any number of noxious or infectious animals introduced among us?

The *third* article of complaint, is, “That it did alienate the minds of the people against *Christ's* person and ministry.” This is not so evident. These wicked people are awed by the apprehension of *Christ's* divine power! And they

they seem to be conscious of guilt ; for they desire him to depart out of their coast. They are afraid of farther censure ! and much more are they concerned about their swine, than the recovery of a wretched fellow-creature, now restored to his right mind. But our Lord does not seem to think, that the affections of this people would be alienated against him ; for afore-time he had never had them engaged in his favour, that we are told of. On the contrary, he seems to expect, that the miracle would have a very different effect, by his ordering the dispossessed man to go home to his friends, and tell them, *how great things the Lord hath done for him, and the compassion he had had upon him.* It was very probable, that upon cool reflection, the people, having this living monument of *Christ's* friendly power with them, would think more justly of him, and be excited to express the greatest veneration of his person and ministry. So that Mr. Chubb's opinion, and that of our Lord's about the *effects* of the miracle, appear to be diametrically opposite the one to the other.

As to the *fourth* thing objected unto, *viz.* Our Lord's gratifying the wicked desires of a great number of devils, or evil spirits : This has as little foundation in the history. For *Christ* is dispossessing them of their power and influence in this country. They perceive it, and beg that *he would not send them out of it.* And *Luke* says, *that they besought him, that he would not command them to go out into the abyss.* Jesus gratifies them in neither of these requests. And though he suffered them to enter into the herd of swine ; yet, as these creatures had been the instruments and means of the peoples expressing their idolatries, and were the ministers of their lusts ; it was a wise permission : for notwithstanding

standing the evil spirits might desire this, from an expectation of its raising the prejudices, and inflaming the passions of the people against *Jesus*: yet, he knew, it would be an open reproof of their idolatries and vices; and would, at the same time, be a sensible illustration of the *malevolence* of those evil spirits; so that the best ends would be promoted by it.

This is, with me, a just and natural defence of the miracle; if it be allowed, Mr. *Chubb's* formidable objection, was but a spectre raised in his own imagination.

See. Mark xi. 12, 13, 14. gives us some disgust; Vol. II. p. 188. because it mentions a fig-tree withering upon our Lord's finding no fruit on it, when the time of figs was not," i. e. not over; or the time of gathering figs not come: for the spring-figs grow ripe, and the autumn-figs continue green. The former are ripe at the beginning of summer. So that as there were leaves, the figs must have been produced, had the tree afforded any; because the fruit appears before the leaves. The objector should have shewn, that our Lord had no ground of expecting fruit from the season. This would have proved *Christ's* ignorance of the common productions of nature.—But this cannot be done; therefore the next thing he should have attempted, ought to have been a proof, that this fig-tree was private property. And such private property too, as did occasion a complaint to be made against him. For, doubtless had it been so, when the Sanhedrim were so difficultly set to find any that would witness against *Jesus*, they might easily have recollected this instance of injustice, and have pleaded it against him. But when impartially viewed, we shall discover that the manifest design of his pronouncing it barren for ever, and its instantly withering-

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Objection
made to
the wither-
ing of the
fig-tree.

withering upon it, was to give them a sample of his divine power; and at the same time exhibit a symbol of their own moral condition; who had been fruitless under the most divine means of culture! who must, as a nation, be e're long destroyed, under his direction, by the hands of the Romans.

Likewise the miracle of turning water into wine, related John ii. is objected to. Vol. II. XXXVI. p. 185, and onward.

See.
The miracle of turning water into wine, objected to.

But the remarks and reflections are stale; and a solution has often been given of them. *Mary*, the mother of *Jesus*, went out of her province, in prescribing to him, when, and in what manner he should exercise miraculous power. And yet, in his answer, *Woman! what have I to do with thee?* there is nothing indecent; forasmuch, as the word, *woman*, was frequently in use as a term of respect. They had a more honourable idea affixed to it, than it usually has, in the idiom of our language, thus used. And in regard to the intention of the miracle of turning water into wine; it is no better than an uncharitable suggestion, *viz.* that it was in order to their riot, luxury, or debauch. There are no materials in the history to support such an insinuation. But the *quantity* might be of great service to the new married couple, whose circumstances seem to have been but narrow. And it was perfectly in character, that after our Lord had been entertained, together with his disciples, that he should thus present them, with the munificent effects of his miraculous power; and give a testimony of his divine mission, to a great number of persons convened on this chearful occasion. It is not at all likely, that in his presence, the guests should venture upon any excess. The insinuations that they did, are very unjust.

Sett.
XXXVII.
Another
objection
to mi-
racles,
from their
not being
wrought
to con-
vince un-
believers.

It is likewise said, *that if the use and intent of miraculous power, is to work conviction on unbelievers, and if unbelief takes place now as heretofore, then it seems to follow, that miracles will take place now as heretofore; because God is the same kind being now as heretofore, and is not a whit altered; but miracles do not take place now to work the conviction of unbelievers, therefore they did not take place heretofore to answer that purpose.* Vol. II. p. 229.

This writer has confessed, *from the improbability of the supposition, that the history of Christ's life and ministry is a fiction, ariseth the probability of the contrary supposition, viz. that there was such a person as Jesus Christ, and that he, in the main, did, and taught as is recorded of him.* Vol. II. page 42.

This being granted; since what is recorded of his actions, appears for the most part to have been miraculous; it is probable that miracles were wrought by him. But if this is probable, the above piece of reasoning is fallacious. And altho' miracles were aforesaid wrought with an intention to produce conviction in unbelievers, it will nor follow, that because there are unbelievers now, that therefore miracles should be wrought; tho' God is the same kind being he ever was. Miracles were to evince the divine mission of *Jesus*, during his public ministry, and were in full proof of it: and after that, miracles were to evince his having commissioned his apostles to preach in his name, the doctrine he had delivered; and did prove that their commission: but when this doctrine had been sufficiently made known, and committed to writing, and the apostles had finished their ministrations, there was no farther occasion for mira-
cles

Posthumous-works.

cles to attest the truth of a most notorious fact ; believed, and professed openly by myriads, in all nations. And God, yet remains the same kind being, who does nothing in vain.

Besides, unbelievers there were, vast numbers, notwithstanding the testimony of miracles ; but there has been an increase of believers since, without their testimony ; therefore the number of unbelievers now, is no reason why miracles should be wrought, as they were in the first propagation of the Christian doctrine. The same means that are effectual to the producing faith or credit in those who are believers, are allowed to those who are unbelievers, and if they are wanting to themselves, in not properly using and applying these means, it is their own fault ; or if they suffer any prejudices to blind their understandings, they must not blame God, or look upon him as obliged to give more than sufficient evidence. If they indeed reckon, or estimate all believers to be weak, or mistaken men, who abuse their reason, and impose on themselves, by embracing Christianity ; they must e'en solace themselves in their own superior abilities, and take all the pleasure they can in their darling infidelity. But let none of them be so vain, as to imagine, that because of their efforts to discredit Christianity, any believer, who can use his reason, will take their *ipse dixit* for equal, much less, superior testimony to that of the authority of the New Testament Writings.

Mr. Chubb objects to God's raising such a ^{Sect.} battery against virtue and true religion, as the ^{XXXVIII.} load of Jewish ceremonies plainly appear to be, ^{Two} apostles surely cannot be admitted : forasmuch as two are said to apostles of Christ, viz. St. Peter, and St. Paul, treat the Mosaic-law with great contempt, contempt.

tempt, as if it was altogether below, and unworthy of the supreme Deity. Vol. I. p. 275, 276. II. p. 19.

Since Mr. *Chubb* has no where shewn, that any of the *Mosaic* ceremonies were a battery raised against virtue and true religion; neither is it in the power of any man to support his assertion: there is little occasion to enter deeply into the subject. Only with respect to the two apostles, it may be allowed that they have spoken contemptuously of the *Jew*-ritual: but then, it has not been in any absolute sense, or as relative to the season and age of that institution. Nothing like this has dropped from their pens; but they thus contemptuously speak of it, in comparison, or in competition with the Christian institution. And they are to be justified in representing it an obsolete, abrogated thing; tho' it had been of divine appointment: for *Moses*, the *Jew*-law-giver, will himself vindicate such treatment of it. See *Deut.* xviii. 18, 19. *I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.* comp. *Joh.* xii. 49, 50.

This prophecy *Moses* delivered, could not refer to a succession of prophets, but only to *Jesus*, as *Peter* has well observed, *Act.* iii. 22, 23, 24. *Forasmuch as all the prophets, from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Hence any one may see that Moses did authorize the apostles to speak of the Mosaic institution as giving way to a more perfect institution, under a superior law-giver, or instructor.—Besides, it should seem that*

that a great part of the burthensome ritual, *had been added because of, or by transgression; or to employ a people fond of ceremonies and rituals, and very prone to idolatry.* This writer has therefore been much too bold, *in excusing the infidelity of the Jews; because of the apostles shewing that the Mosaic institution was to vail to the Christian.* Vol. II. p. 173. It was to be superseded, when this Prophet should appear, mentioned by *Moses*: and it would be at their peril, that they did not hear him in all things; for God would, and he did *require it of them.* Witness the destruction of their nation by *Titus*; and their dispersed remains, which are fugitives throughout the habitable earth!

What deserves more notice, is, *the singling out of the Jew nation, Mr. Chubb affirms, does intimate unreasonable partiality in the divine conduct:—and is the ground of that monstrous doctrine of God's decrees, of his having predestinated some to everlasting happiness, and others to eternal misery, independent of any previous worthiness or unworthiness in his creatures to be the ground of these determinations.* Vol. II. p. 20. See. XXXIX. Unreasonable partiality in singling out the Jew-nation.

He might as well have objected to that declaration of our Lord's, *Matth. xxii. 14. For many are called, but few are chosen.* Which surely cannot mean either an insincerity, or any defect in the call; but a perverseness in the persons who neglect, or reject the call. This must be our Lord's meaning; forasmuch as *God is no respecter of persons: but would have all men come to the knowledge of the truth, and be saved.* Yet men must be free so far as they are moral: so that it is not, cannot be in the power of *omnipotence* to destroy this freedom, and make men virtuous and happy by force. We are very safe in affirming this; because if it was, we may be assured that there

there would not be found one vicious, unhappy creature in all God's intelligent creation, *i. e.* if his *will* or desire, in the language of holy writ, could effect the removal of all wickedness. He does whatever is fit to be done, and all that is worthy his perfections: and if men did all which they are capable of doing, they would all of them be saved.

In the article of an unconditional predestination, I am as much an unbeliever as Mr. Chubb was, or any man can be. So that if I saw, that the singling out of the *Jew*-nation did intimate any unreasonable partiality in God; or could rationally be made the ground of the above monstrous doctrine, I should treat the whole history of the *Jew*-nation as fabulous: for I am assured that no such thing could ever have had place in the divine conduct, as a partial regard to the everlasting well-being of his creatures. So that I am obliged to account for the separation of the *Jew* nation, upon very different principles and motives. Such as,

I. In the spread of idolatry, this separation was made, in order to preserve the belief of one God in the world. This appears, from that people's falling under remarkable judgments upon their idolatry: and also from their signal protection and defence, whilst they kept themselves free from idolatry. II. This separation of the *Jew*-nation, made illustrious the *actual Supremacy* of the one God, manifest in the exercise of a particular providence. This, the nations around *Judea*, had many opportunities of observing; and were often made to acknowledge. III. This separation served to point out the family and place from whence the promised Messiah should arise.— But in no one of these respects do I discern any unreasonable partiality in God; or the least ground
of

unreasonable partiality in God; or the least ground of the monstrous doctrine of predestination. A divine revelation must abhor the doctrine, as manifestly incompatible with the idea of perfection. And if it could be proved that the Bible taught this doctrine, a rejection of it would be fully justified: because of its teaching a doctrine hateful in the eye of a benevolent and just being! It is therefore a mean and base subterfuge in the opposers of revelation, to insinuate, that such blasphemy can be found in the sacred writings.

St. Paul, in the ix, x, and xith chapters to the *Romans*, has nothing to do with those dispensations of providence, that had their reason in men's moral character, or affixed the final states of men. This he assures us of, by instancing in *Jacob* and *Esau*, where no respect was had to their moral character in the election and rejection spoken of: but the determination had place *before they had done good or evil*. And he tells us, that a man might as well find fault with the skill of a potter, because he knew how to make different vessels for different uses; as he might with God for making one man for toil and labour, another for study and contemplation, another for more public and elevated stations: *i. e.* one for more, another for less honourable service. Or, will any complain, because in a great house, they find there are vessels of gold, others of silver, some of brass, others of glass or stone? In God's human family there is as great diversity; but all are designed for use. Indeed there are some, prejudiced by schemes, who have imagined that God's glory is to be inferred from such an act of absolute *sovereignty*, as that of absolute election. Not considering, that it is not consistent with truth, with *his* equity or goodness; who is

no respecter of persons. *Besides*, neither sin, nor the demerit of it can glorify God : for to sin, is to come short of his glory : and he delights not in the death of him that dies ! yet God delights in his *own glory*. Nothing short of the virtue and happiness of God's moral creation, can reflect his glory.

Sect. XL.
Partiality
shewn to
the *Jews*,
for the
sake of
their an-
cestors.

But my author says, that a partial regard was shewn to them for the *sake* of their ancestors. *Indeed, there is a reason assigned for God's shewing such a partial regard to the Jewish nation ; not because they were better and more worthy of his favour than other people : but on account of the respect God had for their ancestors, viz. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and particularly for their father Abraham's sake ; though, I think, this is such a reason as will not well bear reasoning upon : but this is exploded, Ezek. xviii. Vol. II. p. 21, 22.*

It is true, St. Paul speaks of the *Jews* as beloved for the fathers sake, or *through the fathers*, (*διὰ τῶν πατέρων*) and the reason is obvious, for God had promised to *Abraham* that he would multiply his seed, and in his family the *Messiah* should arise. So the angel tells *Isaac*, Gen. xxvi. 24. that he would multiply, *i. e. Jehovah* whom he represented, would multiply his seed for his servant *Abraham's* sake. So when the Psalmist is recounting the benefits of God's providence to *Israel* ; he says, *God has remembered his covenant which he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac*, Pf. cv. 8, 9. The people were to remember the piety of *Abraham* as the reason of the promise, or covenant. And when they said, *Abraham was one, and he inherited the land, by promise, but we are many, the land is given us for an inheritance*, Ezek. xxxiii. 24. *God bids Ezekiel tell them, that because of their*

immoralities, they should be exposed to the sword, and he would lay their land desolate, and the pomp of her strength should cease; and the mountains of Israel shall be desolate that none shall pass through them.

Where is the partiality? what is there unworthy of God in performing the mercy promised to their fathers, and in remembering his holy covenant, the oath which he swore to their father *Abraham*? this is a part of *Zacharias's* song, *Luke* i. 72, 73. And the reason will bear reasoning upon.

As to the instances of cruelty which the Jews pleaded a divine commission for: Vol. II. p. 29. we may be as well assured, as Mr. Chubb ever was, that if they were not reconcilable with the perfections of God, they had not his authority. He can warrant no instances of cruelty; for cruelty has the idea of unnatural fierceness and fury in it. But, if the instances of destruction are capable of being proved to have been just and equal punishments; it is vile to represent them in the shape of cruelties. Nor can the conduct of the Israelites, in these respects, warrant any imitation; because their writings say, in defence of them, that they had orders from God for such executions: which, if true, he saw the reason of his own orders, and no doubt convinced them also of the reasonableness of them. But if he did not give them such orders; then they, most wickedly pretended such orders. The judgment we should pass on such pieces of history, ought to be conformable to the eternal rule of right: and if they are not capable of a conformity to our natural notions of things, i. e. such which the light of nature or reason suggests; they are not what will require our assent. Yet, I doubt not but critical, laborious enquirers into

Señ. XLI. Few cruelty is said to plead a divine commission,

the

the *Hebrew* language and idiom, will be able to remove many more of those difficulties that appear in our translation of the *Jew* writings, in respect to some historical events. That is an excellent one, a gentleman favoured me with, of the learned *Dunlop's*, upon *Gen. vi. 6.* who says, that the *Hebrew* text should be read interrogatory; *shall it repent the Lord that he hath made man? shall it grieve him at his heart?* The history confirms the reading, as one family was spared, and the world re-peopled from it. But supposing that there are several mistakes in the translation of those most ancient writings; they are harmonious as to the grand schemes which they open. The great and important parts are suited to convey an adorable idea of God's government, through the ages of their history: though there may possibly be some defect, in some things of lesser moment to men in after ages: *e. g.* It was of great importance to the *Jews*, to be well assured, that they were under God's direction, in their great public transactions, and in such especially, which they pretended to have his direction in. But then, if at this distance, or in any age, men, who read their history, do find some *few* difficult places, not reconcileable with the moral character of God, they must withhold their belief of them; and conclude, that they have an imperfect representation of the facts. But when this is done, no wise man, who finds that so ancient an history, has the most perfect, rational, and useful discoveries in it, of the first ages of the world; and which has enabled the best critics to distinguish the truth or spuriousness of other historical narrations by it: no wise man, I say, would, because he finds some obscurities, throw contempt on the whole. None but fools and madmen

men would conduct in this manner; for upon such a rule, no history could ever have had any continued existence.

If a testimony delivered in writings, hath been transmitted only by one series of copies; it loseth not half its probability in seventy successions, or in fourteen thousand years: but if it has been banded down by a succession of various copies; the probability must increase through that interval by their consent or agreement. vide Philos. Transf. N^o. 256. upon which Dr. Rotherham of Kendal says, that for this reason we converse, not only with the utmost confidence, but also with the greatest profit, in the beautiful monuments of antiquity. Those ancient writings are read by us, we examine and weigh the facts they relate, as if they were delivering their testimonies first to us.—Who dreams of the velocity or moment of uncertainty, whilst he reads the genuine copies of Thucydides or Polybius, Tacitus or Livy? who disturbs himself with tormenting scruples, when he turns his hand, by day or by night, to Greek or Latin copies? who doubts more, that Julius Cæsar was killed in the senate, or Christ crucified at Jerusalem, than that Charles the First, King of Great Britain was beheaded. Vide Dissertatio Theologica, &c. Sect. xxiii.

It is very trifling in any man, to call in question the validity of a written testimony, because the history was drawn up ages ago, and but by a single person; whereas in such a one, *e. g.* as the *Pentateuch*, it adds much to its credibility, to suppose the history drawn up by one, and that no other than the pen of *Moses*, so far as the end of his ministration. Hence it is, that the names of places and people mentioned, by anticipation, are easily accounted for, which are found in the earlier parts of his history: and which must have

con-

confounded the chronologist, had he supposed the *Pentateuch* wrote by different persons in the different ages of it.

Section
XLII.
Against
the reve-
lation be-
ing liable
to corrup-
tion.

This will at the same time, answer to the objection made, against the Christian revelation, being put into the hands of men: *unless God should, by a constant and particular application of his power and providence, interpose, and defend such revelation, from all corruption, alteration, addition, and diminution;—which would render it unnecessary for us to be upon the watch against fraud and imposition.* Vol. II. p. 62, 63.

Besides, the propriety of the divine means, deposited in the hands of men, as free agents; there seems to have been a divine care taken to establish the great doctrines of Christianity, by making them so universally known in the apostolic age. Hence the numerous copies of the Gospel-history, rendered it *morally impossible* that any alteration, or corruptions could be introduced, without being easily detected. And it appears to be an incontestible fact, that among the various lessons which the different idioms of languages have introduced, there are no material or important doctrines at all injured. And what *obscurities* may have happened in some verbal renderings; the current reasonings of the context, or some parallel place will enable one to remove the obscurity. Which little difficulties, appear to me, so far from being objections to the divinity of the Christian revelation, that they are in its favour: because some caution and labour must be due, and will be employed by every honest mind to obtain the sense of those writings, which have in them the doctrine of *eternal life*! The most abandoned infidel, will own, that truth lies not often upon the surface, but is like a spring at the bottom of a deep well, which requires labour.

labour. And yet its great doctrines in the gospel are all plain and practical, accommodated to the reason and moral sense of mankind; so that it is impossible that any such corruption of them as would have an immoral tendency, can ever be allowed to be the genuine sense of any part of the New Testament writings. Nor, will the *numerous copies* in the world, admit of any attempt being successful. The *Papists* are conscious of this, and therefore lock up the Scriptures from the laity.

Indeed, we are told, *that experience and fact have been vouchers in the case;—for, some who preached Christianity were men of perverse minds, and walked after their own lusts, 1 Tim. vi. 5. Some preached it for envy and strife, Phil. i. 15. some for filthy lucre, Tit. i. 11. some allowed of idolatry. Which gives the character of Christians in general, viz. that all sought their own, and not the things of Jesus Christ.—thus was the gospel of Christ perverted and abused, even in the first age.* Vol. II. p. 64, 65.

Section
XLIII.
Experi-
ence and
fact
vouchers
against
the reve-
lation.

But how does this prove any adulteration, any corruption, any alteration in the gospel-plan? They are no vouchers at all in the case, nor can be, unless it could be shewn that these immoralities were then patronized by it, or that in the history we now have, any of them have the least connivance. The too general impurity and worldliness both of preachers and people, occasioned these complaints. But the censures that are passed upon all abuses of the Christian doctrine, in the practices of the earliest Christians, are wholly in favour of Christianity, and afford the most important instructions. All may know, by these remonstrances, who, among the *clergy* and *laity* do behave in the Christian character. The selfish, narrow, envious, worldly spirit is
now

now as abhorrent in the eye of the Christian doctrine and scheme, as ever it was. But Christianity neither did in the apostles days, nor can in any age prevent men, who profess it, from making use thereof, to serve the purposes of their lusts and passions.

What therefore, would much better have answered the seeming desires and demands of Mr. *Chubb*, would have been, that God should have so interposed by his power and providence, as to have made all men at first *incapable* of using the revelation to any other purposes, than those for which it was designed. And the history we have of the success of the gospel, in the first ages of it, must have been such as would have discovered an uniform, irresistible efficacy on the spirits and actions of all its professors. But had this been the case for that age, and no more; would not Mr. *Chubb* have had reason to conclude, that *Christianity*, or the gospel-scheme *now*, could not be the same it was then, because of its having lost that original energy?

And will not *experience* and *fact* be equally as strong vouchers in the case, against the light of nature? why is the religion of nature so much perverted and abused? and what interpositions of power and providence are further needful to shew its divinity? *experience* and *fact* have never been any vouchers against the divinity of the Christian scheme; but on the contrary. For all men, who have sincerely practised upon it, have been the most just, equitable, and friendly; and that too upon the noblest principles, and immortal motives: *viz.* an imitation of God, and Jesus; and the certain connection that there is between truth and life! or holiness and happiness.

But

But to what purpose have we been defending St. Paul's conduct, as it is related in the history of the acts of the apostles, if what is said be true, viz. *that the history seems to have been the product of the second century, in which, according to the learned, fraud and imposition took place in great abundance.* Vol. II. p. 216. Note.

Sett.
XLIV.
The history of the acts seems the product of the second century.

There is one observation that seems to set aside this conjecture, viz. no notice is taken in this history of one single event, which would lead us to conclude, that the destruction of Jerusalem, by Titus, had taken place. But according to the rules of just criticism, the age, or antiquity of an history is to be estimated from the known events, customs and manners of the age and people, in which it is said to have been written. Now, if the history of the *acts of the apostles* had been written so late as the second century, there must certainly have been some *criteria* of that century, that would have discovered themselves. But Titus laid siege to it in the year 70, before the passover. A soldier set fire to the temple, and burnt it the 10th of August: and the upper city was carried by assault the 10th of September. It is therefore incredible, that such an event should have already happened, respecting the scenery of so much action which is related in this history of the apostles, and yet, not one single circumstance in support of it! The same observation will serve to support the antiquity of the gospels, and of the epistles.

The perfect agreement of the *facts*, related in this history, together with the promises Christ made, and his predictions of the treatment his apostles would meet with, in the execution of their commission; do afford a convincing evidence of the truth and genuineness of this record. And altho' the scenery of its action does chiefly

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exhibit

exhibit the ministrations of *St. Paul*, the great apostle of the *Gentiles*; yet, *St. Peter's* having the *keys*; i. e. his first opening the doctrine of the gospel to *Gentiles*, is recorded. Neither is there the least partiality shewn to *Paul*, in the narratives. The history carrieth him, a prisoner to *Rome*, the capital of the greatest empire in the known world; and so confirms the reality of the Christian religion, as it can admit of no reasonable doubt. In this imperial city *Paul* dwelt for two whole years together, *preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.*

It is highly probable, that as *St. Paul* had friends in *Cæsar's* household. *Phil. iv. 22.* That they had obtained him this liberty. Here, is a series of facts recorded of *St. Paul*, which had place in *Rome*. And as we have before shewn, that the history must have been wrote in the first century, before the destruction of *Jerusalem*: so it amounts to a moral certainty, that the history is genuine. For although, the persecutions which afterwards follow, would forbid the *Roman historians* from taking notice of this licence given to *St. Paul*, and the success he had in his preaching at *Rome*; yet, the persecutions themselves were reiterated, and repeated confirmations of the truth of this fact, viz. that *many thousands* of people had embraced the gospel, within the *Roman* empire.

Besides, this very history is a record of the gospel being preached, and churches planted by *Paul*, in the most famous cities of *Greece*. To which the epistles written by him, and the apocalypse by *St. John*, bear testimony. The above conjecture is therefore without any foundation.

Yet

Yet, it is said, *that the histories were put into, and kept in the hands of believers, by which means unbelievers were prevented from confuting them, had it been in their power, or inclination to do it.* Vol. II. p. 204, 205.

See.
XLV.
The New-
Testa-
ment his-
tories kept
from un-
believers.

This is too superficial to be admitted as of weight in argument; because, the *great doctrine* of Christianity, which the apostles were commissioned to publish, taught, *that Jesus Christ was a divine prophet, who had been put to death by the Jews; whom God had raised from the dead, and exalted, by placing him at the head of dominion: and that he is appointed to raise the dead and judge the world.* This message which they delivered, respects a fact, upon which their doctrine wholly rested, as to the truth and veracity of it. A *fact* that the people of *Judea* might be fully acquainted with; and that any foreigners might examine into, who travelled into *Judea*. And whose testimony might satisfy others of their own countries. These stood in no need of the histories being at first drawn up, in order to their conviction. And so long as the apostles lived, all nations wherever they came, had an *ocular demonstration* given them of the truth of the doctrine which they taught, from the miracles which they wrought *in the name of Jesus*. So that the histories of our Lord, and of his apostles ministrations, were not so properly intended for the public use in their age in *Judea*, as for other parts of the world, and for the use of after-ages. There was, in fact, a more direct and full evidence afforded to the unbeliever, than if the writings which were but a record of that evidence, had been put into his hand. *Facts* are most stubborn incontestible things! they were easily examined into, both in *Jerusalem* and elsewhere: the *vouchers* of them being legal evi-

dence, in the eyes of all men. And the *absurdity* of the demand, made by the infidel-Jews, of an examination of their histories, whilst they were eye-witnesses to the evidences which the apostles were giving of those *facts* they related; the absurdity of this would be glaring.—And here one might observe, that notwithstanding the *learned* have not been able to settle the precise time when the several gospels were published; yet, inasmuch as it is evident, that they were all published before the destruction of *Jerusalem*; if we suppose them not published till towards the *latter end* of the ministry of the several historians, inasmuch as the apostles doctrine was more generally known, it would be impossible for these writings to have met with credit, had not their narratives agreed with their teachings. So that instead of being an objection, it is a stronger argument of the genuineness of them, than if they had been published at the beginning of the apostles ministrations. And that the New Testament writers were under a divine inspiration, does appear very emphatically from the important sense, which those authors always express of the things they deliver; since in respect of their own abilities, they constantly discover the greatest modesty*.

See
XLV.
Objection
to their
being first
wrote in
Greek.

But it is further said, *that these histories were first wrote in Greek, a language that those illiterate Hebrews must have been strangers to, which is a circumstance of consequence in the present case.*
Vol. II. p. 205.

Admit they were, no injury was done thereby to the Jew, in his own country, who stood in no need of a written history of facts, when so many
thousands

* See Dr. Doddridge's Dissertation on the inspiration of the New Testament.

thousands of living evidences were every where to be found, that had seen the proofs of *Christ's* divine mission; and well knew that he who had been crucified, was now risen again; and that God had raised him to the head of power; forasmuch as the apostles were every where in *Judea* working miracles in his name, in testimony of his being risen from the dead. Had Mr. *Chubb* said, that the request made by the *Jews*, viz. *that Christ would shew them a sign from heaven, did prove, that they had never seen him work a miracle!* This would have served to expose his stupidity; but could not have answered any valuable purpose: for the very request supposeth that they had seen him work *many* miracles; otherwise, they were stupid creatures, to ask of him to work such a *particular sort* of miracle. They would not have prescribed to him the *mode* and *form* of miracle that would gratify them, had they not been persuaded of his miraculous power. But this by the way.

It is certain that the history, tho' wrote in *Greek*, could be no injury to the *Jew*, in the first Century. And after the dispersion, as the *Greek* was most generally understood, it was the fittest language to write the sacred histories in, and would make them the more extensively useful.

Moreover, it is objected, *that they were written in a language which, it may well be supposed, the people of Galilee, Capernaum, &c. did not understand.* Vol. II. p. 206.

An unfortunate objection this; because nothing could have more fully pointed out Mr. *Chubb's* unacquaintedness with the historical account given us, than his instances of *Galilee, Capernaum, &c.* for *Galilee*, where our Lord so much resided, and *Capernaum*, stood in the least need of such history.

history. And as to *Galilee*, there were great numbers of *Greeks* resided in it, which makes the instance much more unfortunate; see *Math.* iv. 15. *John* xii. 20, 21, 22. In the latter text, *Greeks* are said to come up to the feast, and apply to *Philip*, who was of *Bethsaida* of *Galilee*: most probably, because they were his neighbours, and he understood their language.

It is sufficient that the apostles were acquainted with all the languages; and so were judges what was the most proper to write their histories, and epistles in. With me, it seems highly probable, that they would provide copies of the Gospel History for *Greece* and *Rome*, as well as for *Syria*. Their *testimony* given to the truth and authenticity of those histories, would be convincing to all who attended their ministrations. Every church would be furnished with an history of the life of *Christ*. I take this to be intended by *St. Paul*, when he writes thus to *Timothy*, 2 ep. i. 14. *that good thing which was committed unto thee, that depositum, keep; because of the Holy Spirit that dwelleth in us.* This, I suppose to have been a copy of the Gospel, given by *St. Paul* for the use of the Church at *Ephesus*. So I reckon he refers to a copy of the history of *Christ*, that he had conveyed to the Church at *Rome*, *Rom.* i. 16. when he mentions God's judging the secrets of men by *Jesus Christ*, *according to my Gospel.* And in his epistle to the *Galatians*, he seems to have presented that Church with a copy, ch. i. 6—10. And when he is affirming his own fidelity in his office, he tells the *Corinthians*, 2 ep. ii. 17. *We are not as many, who corrupt the word of God: we dare not corrupt it with any mixtures of our own.* And he closeth his epistle to the *Ephesian* Church, by declaring, that *grace* or *favour*, would be with all them that love the Lord
Jesus

Jesus Christ in incorruption: *i.e.* who admitted of no mixtures in the Gospel plan. And if I mistake not, by his farewell, when he says, *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you*; he intends, the written Gospel: that *record* of the love of God! and so emphatically called, the grace of our Lord *Jesus Christ*.—Hence he commands *Timothy* to give attention to *reading*. What must he read? nothing more probable, than the *depositum*, the Gospel, which would qualify him for exhortation, and other forms of giving instruction, 1 ep. iv. 13. To this written history, I understand, *Peter* does allude, when he calls the word of God, the *incorruptible seed*, and the *sincere milk of the word*, 1 Pet. i. 23. and puts it in opposition to the mortality of the apostles, *all flesh is grass* that withereth, and even the flower of it falleth away; but *the word of God endureth for ever, and this is the word, which by the Gospel is preached unto you*.

It was necessary, the apostles should provide the churches with copies of the gospel history, that after their decease, they might be able to refer all doctrines men taught to some certain standard; and by such comparison, might know their value. This I suppose to have taken place, after the apostles had planted, and settled churches in the several parts of the world.

Respecting morality; Mr. Chubb thus reasons. *As man's relations, obligations, and duties, all arise from his present existence, and from what he now is and has; so his present well-doing must needs be the special and more immediate object of his present regard. As to man's well-doing, in a constitution of things to come, all the provision he is capable of making for it now, is to act suitably to his manly character, and properly fill up the post assigned him in this.* Vol. I. p. 23.

See.
XLVI.
Man's relations,
&c. all
arise from
his present
existence.

The

The reasoning is sophistical, and very fallacious; because the provision which a man is thus making for his well-doing in a constitution of things to come, must afford him more pleasure from the prospect, than any quantity of perishing good can: which, by the train of Mr. *Chubb's* argumentation, is the thing intended, when he says, *his present well-doing* must needs be the special and more immediate object of his present regard. So that the reasoning is not just. Moreover, a man's relations, obligations, and duties, *do not* all arise from his present existence, and from what he now is and has: for the very reason, that by acting suitably to his manly character, and properly filling up the post assigned him, he is said to make provision for his well-doing in a constitution of things to come. The fallacy of the conclusion must hence be allowed, unless any man can shew, that no relation, obligation, or duty does arise from the *end* of a man's pursuit. But if this cannot be shewn, then it must follow, that a man's relations, obligations, and duties do not all arise from his present existence, and from what he now is and has. Surely relation, obligation and duty, must all arise from an *end*; the attainment of which, man is now by right action making provision for. Nay, it is amazing, that Mr. *Chubb* did not see that this *final end* thus providing for, has relations, obligations, and duties arising from it, that plainly demand man's special, and more immediate regard! This is the truth of the case; the very reverse of what this writer has affirmed. And it so happens, that that man, who is laying up in store a good foundation against the time to come, is hereby best prepared and furnished unto every good work at present.

Yet,

Yet, it is said, *that to suppose the present constitution of things so imperfect, as that another constitution of things to come is necessary to rectify the disorders, and supply the deficiencies of this, is, I think, to cast a severe reflection on the founder of this world.*—And that our obligations to God and men must be the same, whether there will be a future retribution or not. Vol. I. p. 401, 402.

This is mere jargon, and discovers a great confusion of ideas: for there is no manner of defect supposeable in the present constitution, whilst we allow that it is every way well suited to the place it has in the scale of God's operations and institutions; even tho' it should be *more* perfect than a former, and *less* perfect than a succeeding constitution. But that our obligations to God and men must be the *same*, whether there will be any future retribution or not, is altogether untrue: because we can neither consider the relation subsisting between us and God, or between us and men to be the same, in this supposition, and in the other opposite one. We cannot take in the same compass and extent of concern we have with God's wisdom, power, and goodness: nor even retain the same ideas of them, supposing no future retribution, as in the supposition of its certainty. And in our concern with men, how different must be our ideas of them?

To palliate this monstrous position, we are before told, *that a future retribution does not so properly depend upon the inequality of mens circumstances, as upon their having contributed to the good, or to the hurt of the public.* Vol. I. p. 394—399.

One may see plainly how Mr. Chubb laboured to remove what he found incommoded his scheme. He had imagined, that this present constitution might be esteemed perfect in itself, irrelative to,

Scilicet.
XLVII.
A future retribution said not to depend on present inequalities, in this constitution.

and independent on another: and to support this, he will not allow of any *inequalities* in the present constitution, that shall make needful a subsequent one. But, poor man, what has he done? why he has supposed that man's being beneficent, or injurious to society, may be a ground of expecting a future state of retribution. But will not this include in its idea, necessarily include in it, present inequalities or deficiencies in the reward of virtue, and in the punishment of vice? Surely it will. And at the same time it shews, that this constitution of things cannot rationally be supposed irrelative unto, or independent on another. Nay more, it will unavoidably infer the fitness of a revelation being made to man of that future constitution; and one that shall point out clearly to him the concern which he has in it. Which at a single brush, sweeps down the whole web of Mr. Chubb's reasoning.

Sect.
XLVIII.
The au-
thority of
Jesus, and
St. Paul,
rejected.

Mr. Chubb says, *that both Jesus Christ and St. Paul were of opinion that the Jews believed a future state: but what their opinion was grounded upon does not appear, otherwise than from the quotation Christ made out of the Pentateuch, Matth. xxii. 32. as from Exod iii. 6. And as to Christ's implication, Mr. Chubb says, he thinks, those words may possibly bear another construction, which may not be greatly forced nor unnatural, and in which no such implication is contained, nor does such doctrine follow from it: as thus, I that speak unto thee out of the burning bush, am that very same person that was with, spoke to, and was the God of Abraham, &c. and therefore thou mayest rely on me, as they have done before thee. Vol. I. P. 92, 93.*

This is, I think, a finishing stroke in the *farewel* of this writer: and could it have been supported, would have secured him from a censure

that will unavoidably fall upon his pen, tho' he is personally removed out of the reach of our notice. But what could the unhappy man mean by *correcting* our Lord? His own more correct construction is quite impertinent, and has no affinity with the argument; for our Lord is answering a question which respects a given case, *viz.* of a woman who died after having had seven husbands. The question put upon it, was, *whose wife she should be in the resurrection?*—Our Lord, in reply, says,—*in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels of God in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, &c.—God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.* This last is the implication that Mr. Chubb presumes to call forced and unnatural. And his construction is, *that Moses might rely on God, as Abraham, &c. had relied on him.—Which construction, he says, is to the speaker's purpose: whereas for him to have informed Moses, that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were then alive, or that there would be a future existence to men, seems to be less so.* Vol. I. p. 94. — Is not this to declare, that he thought himself a *better* judge of the speech made to *Moses*, than *Jesus* was? A matchless piece of presumption, surely, to say this, without any apology!—No foundation for this correction, as it will not agree at all with our Lord's reasoning. And in the speech made to *Moses*, nothing could have been more to the purpose than to have assured him, that he remained the God of *Abraham*, of *Isaac*, and of *Jacob*. That they had no more lost their existence, than the bush in which he dwelt: which bush remained unhurt, tho' in the midst of flame! that whatever difficulties might be before him,

and perils, he would have him take courage; for in obeying his voice, he would remain his God after death, as he did the God of the patriarchs.—Our Lord's implication will admit no blemish, from the very impertinent correction. Besides, as to his saying, that neither our Lord, nor St. Paul, appear to have any other ground of their opinion, is notoriously false; for there are numbers of other passages. I will mention a few; the translation of *Enoch*, and *Elijah*, the *Jews* gave credit to; tho' Mr. Chubb did not. And the manner of *Moses*, their law-giver's dying, was another event, on which the *Jews* most probably did believe a future state, as well as from *Pf.* xvi. 8, 9, 10, 11. xvii. 15. *Eccl.* xii. 14. *Ezek.* xviii. 19.—end. *Dan.* xii. 2. *Job* xxvii. 5, 8. Besides, both our Lord and St. Paul knew, by their converse with the *Jews*, that the most reigning sect, the *Pharisees*, did professedly believe in a future state.

How could Mr. Chubb say of *Jesus Christ* and St. Paul being on the affirmative side the question, (*viz.* that the *Jews* did believe a future state) *tho' what such their opinion was grounded upon, I think, does no otherwise appear, than from the quotation Christ made from the Pentateuch.*

Admit that the argument Mr. Chubb is upon, refers to the divine legation of *Moses*,—the translation of *Enoch*, and the history of *Abel*, of *Abraham*, and the other patriarchs, were sufficient intimations of a future state. Especially when we add, that our Lord, by this answer, put the *Sadducees* to silence, *Matth.* xxiii. 34. a proof, that as they owned the pentateuch to be of divine authority, so they saw the force of the argument; and they only were affected by it, not the *Pharisees*; since the former disbelieved, and the latter believed a future state.

More-

Moreover, Mr. Chubb's manner of expression will bear no limitation to the time of *Moses's* ministration; but, I think, must be referred to the state of the *Jews* in general, and till the time of the *Messiah's* being raised up among them.

I might farther observe, upon the implication, or inference our Lord made from the speech to *Moses*, that it was very just and natural, and easy for the *Jews* to have made; *since in Jehovah's being the God of Abraham, &c. it did appear that the patriarchs had a personal concern in the fulfilment of the promise made to them, viz. that in their seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed: and as they had a concern personally in the promises made to the patriarchs; so it would follow, that there must be a future state; or that the patriarchs had not finished their existence.* On this promise the *Jews* valued themselves, as the descendants of *Abraham*. *Isaiab* bids the righteous comfort themselves under the public calamities, by looking back to what God did to *Abraham* and to *Sarah*, *Is. li. 2.* *David* speaks of the *Jew* nation, as the people of the God of *Abraham*, *Pf. xlvii. 9.* *Micah* comforts them by this finishing of his prophecy, *thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn to our fathers from the days of old.* So that the implication had much propriety, as well as truth in it; and was an appeal to the national sense: for they were, at this time, expecting a fulfilment of the promise made to *Abraham*.

If these remarks upon Mr. *Tho. Chubb's Posthumous-works* shall be found to be rational, fair, and just; no more, I apprehend, will be needful to shew the incompetency of his judgment, the fallacy of his reasonings, and the dangerous tendency of his *farewel*: as it is not my province to sit in judgment upon his moral character, farther than

than his writings have led me; so I have not presumed to pass any sentence. *To his own master he standeth, or falleth.* And altho' his farewell has been censured by me, it would give me no small pleasure to find, that such was the integrity of his heart, notwithstanding the errors of his judgment, that he shares, or participates the everlasting blessedness of the upright.



F I N I S.